

COSHH ASSESSOR COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

1. A commander, manager or accountable person or any person who has been delegated the responsibility to carry out a COSHH risk assessment **must** be competent in risk assessment having successfully completed recognised risk assessment training.
2. Those persons most likely to be competent assessors will usually have:
 - a. A basic understanding of the COSHH Regulations or have access to someone who does. The assessor or their adviser will need a good working knowledge of the content and principles of the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and relevant guidance;
 - b. The ability to systematically gather relevant information about how exposure may occur and the risks to health from that exposure. This requires the ability to:
 - (1) understand the significance of what is being observed during the process, particularly if it is different from written procedures;
 - (2) identify where operational conditions may influence the way the process is carried out and how this may affect the risk to health / exposure;
 - (3) identify and review technical literature where relevant;
 - (4) ask relevant questions of operators, supervisors, managers, advisers and so on and draw all the information together from all sources in a systematic way, to estimate likelihoods and consequences; and
 - (5) form valid and justifiable conclusions about the risks to health.
 - c. The ability to specify the actions required to comply with the regulations. This involves:
 - (1) asking fundamental questions about whether exposures need to occur (for example; can process or substances be eliminated);
 - (2) having an appreciation of the range of possible control measures and the actions required to maintain those control measures; and
 - (3) ability to look critically at existing arrangements and identify where they may not be appropriate and / or effective (assistance may be required from specialists).
3. Understand their limitations - the assessor **should** know or be aware of where expertise that is likely to be required during the assessment process can be sourced, and to know at what stage that expertise will need to be involved, for example. air monitoring (exposure monitoring) **should** only be carried out by professionally trained persons.
4. Occupational hygiene advice on the selection and fit testing of respiratory protective equipment **should** be sought where its use has been identified.
5. Make a report effectively communicating the findings about the risks and the precautions to be taken to all stakeholders (therefore the assessor **should** be in such a position that all stakeholders can be identified, and the information provided).