

1.11 Guidance

Chemicals risk management in the company

A chemicals management system is a systematic approach to the procurement, storage, use, emission and exposure control, product design and disposal of chemicals within a facility.

The aim of chemical risk management is to prevent any physical, health or environmental damage from the use of chemicals of concern. It includes ensuring the integrity of installations (no accidents, spills, fires from wrong chemicals handling), workforce safety (no chemicals-related occupational diseases, favourable working conditions, use of personal protective equipment) and costs for emission control, chemicals storage and the disposal of hazardous waste are kept as low as possible by careful planning of the type of chemicals used and how they are applied in the processes. If chemicals are not used, stored and handled properly, they can cause injuries, illnesses, fires, explosions or negative environmental impacts.

The implementation of a chemicals risk management system is an investment, but the costs pay off in the longer term. A chemicals risk management system includes a structured and continuous monitoring of (hazardous) chemicals used in a company, the identification of situations where damage could occur and the respective prevention measures. This includes controlling what input materials [#Section 3 landing page](#) are used, continuous monitoring of information on the flow of chemicals in the company via an inventory [# Section 4 landing page](#), identifying if and which chemicals are of concern and what action [# Section 5 landing page](#) could be taken to avoid their use as well as communicating and cooperating with the customers [#Section 6 landing page](#).

It is core that the responsibilities for all these chemicals risk management tasks are clearly allocated, either to a dedicated chemicals risk manager or to several persons. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and whom to turn to as well as that no gaps in the management of chemical risks occur in the company. In addition, a company needs to dedicate sufficient resources so the persons who are responsible can carry out their tasks properly. Companies where the responsibilities for chemicals risk management are properly assigned usually perform better than those with no structured approach.

This toolkit gives guidance on all the crucial elements of a chemicals management system.