

> Quick Guide Emergency Management

Preventing or managing risk to people and the environment

The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996 deals with the safe management of all hazardous substances including those that are explosive, flammable, oxidising, toxic, corrosive, or harmful to the environment. The HSNO regime requires substances to be controlled throughout their lifecycle and prescribes regulations covering packaging, identification, emergency management, disposal, tracking, storage and handling.

This Emergency Management Guide tells you what measures to put in place so that should an incident or emergency occur involving hazardous substances, the effects are minimised and mitigated both in severity and extent.

What does Emergency Management involve?

Clearly, the first priority for any business is prevention of accidents and incidents. Emergency Management can, however, limit the adverse effects of an incident and provide for the mitigation of those effects.

The HSNO Emergency Management requirements are primarily found in the Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations¹. These regulations list three levels of Emergency Management requirements and these depend on the quantities of hazardous substances that you hold. The levels include requirements for the provision of information (eg first aid instructions or spill response procedures), equipment (eg fire-extinguishers) and emergency response plans.

→ Level 1

- Information, for example first aid directions or emergency response contact details on labels, should be clear and readily available so people know the effects of the substance and the remedies

→ Level 2

- Documentation, such as Safety Data Sheets, should be made available so that people will know in advance the properties of the substance and what to do in an emergency
- Fire extinguisher requirements

→ Level 3

- Signage requirements
- Emergency response plans
- Secondary containment, or bunding, to contain spills

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¹ Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Amendment Regulations 2004 and Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations 2001.

What level of Emergency Management do I need?

The level depends on the quantity of hazardous substances held at the location, and the requirements are cumulative with higher levels of Emergency Management required when larger quantities of hazardous substances are present. The 'trigger quantities' for each hazardous substance classification for each level of Emergency Management are listed in the various schedules to the Emergency Management Regulations. Where a substance has more than one hazard classification, the required trigger is the lowest trigger quantity for those hazard classifications.

In the case of the fire extinguisher, emergency response planning and signage requirements, the trigger quantities are based on the aggregated quantity of all hazardous substances held at that location.

What do labels need to contain?

Every container or package held at a location in excess of the trigger quantities listed in Schedule 1 of the Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations² must have Emergency Management information on the label or some other means of providing such information. This information must be available within 10 seconds.

The table below sets out what Emergency Management information must be provided (on a label) for the different hazard classes:

Hazardous property	Hazard classes	24 hour Emergency contact details	Fire fighting requirements	Control temperature*	Exposure symptoms	First aid	Environmental effects	Environmental mitigation
Explosive	1	✓						
Flammable	2, 3, 4			✓				
Oxidising	5	✓	✓	✓				
Toxic	6	✓				✓		
Corrosive	8	✓			✓	✓		
Ecotoxic	9						✓	✓

✓ = required

* = a warning of the temperature at which the substance is likely to ignite (for flammables) or decompose and possibly explode (for oxidisers)

Who is responsible for labelling requirements?

Suppliers or sellers of hazardous substances must ensure that this information is provided with the substances and that it meets the minimum standards of comprehensibility, clarity and durability³ (generally this will be by way of labels).

The Person in Charge of the place where the hazardous substances are held must ensure that the information requirements continue to be met (ie labels stay intact and legible).

A *Quick Guide on Labelling* is available from ERMA New Zealand to provide additional detail on the information that must be contained on labels as a consequence of the Emergency Management and other HSNO Regulations.

² Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Amendment Regulations 2004 and Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations 2001 list the trigger quantities.

³ Hazardous Substances (Identification) Amendment Regulations 2004 and Hazardous Substances (Identification) Regulations 2001

Where do Safety Data Sheets come in?

One means of complying with the documentation requirements (Level 2) is a Safety Data Sheet. These must be available for each substance held at a place of work when in excess of the trigger quantities in Schedule 2 of the Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations.

Safety Data Sheets must provide information about:

- emergency preparations
- special training or equipment needed for emergencies
- actions to reduce or eliminate danger in an emergency
- actions to be taken to restore adequate control of the substance after an emergency.

Safety Data Sheets will also meet the documentation requirements of other regulations. They must be available to a person handling the substance within 10 minutes. While there may be other means to provide such documentation, Safety Data Sheets are a very practical way of meeting these requirements.

Who is responsible for Safety Data Sheets requirements?

Suppliers must provide Safety Data Sheets the first time they sell a hazardous substance to a person and on request thereafter.

The Person in Charge of the place of work must ensure that Safety Data Sheets are present and available (to workers) where the trigger quantities are exceeded.

Fire Extinguishers

Every place where explosive, flammable or oxidising substances are held above certain quantities must have the specified number of fire extinguishers as listed in Schedule 3 of the Emergency Management Regulations. You do not need to add up the number of extinguishers required for all substances present. You only need the highest number specified for any hazardous substance present.

The regulations set out the minimum performance standard for fire extinguishers as well as details of where they should be located.

Additional fire fighting equipment is specified for tanks where large volumes of particularly hazardous substances (Class 2.1.1 or 3.1) are stored. In these cases you will need a Test Certificate for the tank and your Test Certifier can advise what additional fire fighting equipment is needed.

Signage

Signage is required wherever the quantity of a substance held at a place of work exceeds the trigger quantities in Schedule 5 of the Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations. Among other things, signs must indicate the action to be taken in an emergency. A *Quick Guide on Signage* is available from ERMA New Zealand.

Emergency Response Plans

Schedule 4 of the Hazardous Substances (Emergency Management) Regulations sets down the trigger quantities for Emergency Response Plans (ERPs). A single ERP is required for the workplace and it must cover all hazardous substances held, or likely to be held there.

An ERP must identify all likely emergencies that may arise due to the presence of the substances at the location. For each emergency, the plan must:

- describe the actions to be taken in an emergency
- identify the people responsible for these actions, their skills and responsibilities
- list emergency contact details
- identify the location and purpose of materials needed in an emergency
- provide information on the Emergency Management decision-making procedures and sequence of emergency response actions.

ERPs must identify additional firefighting equipment required or other Emergency Management facilities (eg safety shower) or materials (eg neutralising agents).

ERPs must be tested at least every 12 months or within 3 months of a change to the plan (including persons identified in the plan). Testing must demonstrate that every procedure or action in the plan is workable and effective. Records of testing must be kept for at least 2 years.

These plans can be part of other emergency planning documentation required under other legislation, such as the HSE Act.

Secondary containment

Secondary containment is required wherever liquid hazardous substances are held in quantities exceeding the trigger quantities listed in Schedule 4 (same schedule as for ERPs).

The specific requirements of a secondary containment system depend on the capacities of the containers, the hazardous properties of the substances and whether they are held above or below ground.

Secondary containment is designed to prevent the spread of hazardous substances following any incident, fire, spillage or leaks. It is provided to contain the substance and prevent any adverse effects on people or the environment.

Who is responsible for ensuring Emergency Management steps are in place?

In relation to labelling and Safety Data Sheet requirements, the supplier is primarily responsible for providing these with the substance, and ensuring they meet the required performance standards.

The Person in Charge (of a location) is responsible for ensuring Emergency Management procedures are in place wherever threshold quantities are exceeded. This includes ensuring:

- the right number of adequate fire extinguishers are present and they are correctly located
- adequate emergency response plans are prepared, made available to staff and tested
- secondary containment is provided
- Safety Data Sheets are available
- labelling requirements continue to be met.

Are there exclusions?

Small amounts of hazardous substances may not need to meet certain Emergency Management requirements (dependent on the trigger quantities for the particular hazard classifications involved), although we would always advise you to make yourself familiar with the hazards of all substances that you handle as well as the precautions to be taken.

Hazardous substances being transported will have different Emergency Management requirements in accordance with the relevant transport legislation. Hazardous substances that are in the fuel system, control system or electrical system of a vehicle, aircraft or ship are excluded from the HSNO regulatory requirements.

An example

The table below depicts the Emergency Management requirements applying to a location holding petrol, according to the quantity held. You might wish to construct similar tables for your substances.

Quantity held (litres)	<1	1-5	5-50	50 - 200	200 - 250	250 -1000	>1000
Level 1 info	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Level 2 info	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire extinguisher (no.)	✗	✗	✗	✓ (1)	✓ (2)	✓ (2)	✓ (2)
Signage	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Emergency response plan	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Secondary containment	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

✗ = not required

✓ = required

Further Information

Obtain copies of other Quick Guides on Approved Handlers, Person in Charge, Labelling, Packaging, Signage, and Tracking from ERMA New Zealand.

ERMA New Zealand User Guide to Controls Regulations, available on our website, provides further details on the HSNO regulatory system for hazardous substances.

Contact details

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