

Tips for Controlling Exposures to Toxic and Hazardous Substances with Regulated Areas

Toxic and hazardous substances pose a range of health hazards. It is essential you are aware of those hazards and put measures in place to reduce risk. For some toxic and hazardous substances, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and select state requirements necessitate the use of regulated areas to control exposures; sometimes state requirements are more stringent than OSHA's. This one pager describes ways to establish and manage regulated areas in your workplace to reduce exposures to toxic and hazardous substances.

IDENTIFY THE REGULATED AREA

Your industrial hygiene office conducts monitoring to determine if the toxic and hazardous substances present in your workplace exceed any exposure limits triggering a requirement for a regulated area. Observe the process and worker movements to identify any transition areas related to your regulated areas. Transition areas are buffer areas between general workspaces and regulated areas with potential to become contaminated. Examples of transition areas include halls, walkways, or other adjacent areas subject to cross-contamination.

What is a Regulated Area?

A regulated area is any workspace where airborne concentrations of the substance exceed, or can reasonably be expected to exceed, established exposure limits for the substance.

Exposure limits vary for each substance. Some toxic and hazardous substances with expanded OSHA health standards require regulated areas, while some even require a written compliance program.

Visit OSHA to view a list of toxic and hazardous substances and review regulatory requirements at: [osha.gov/SLTC/hazardoustoxicsubstances/index.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardoustoxicsubstances/index.html)

Best Practice—Entry and Exit of a Regulated Area



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Demarcate the boundaries to your regulated and transition areas and use signage to separate these work areas from the rest of the workplace. Post signage in a manner to adequately establish and alert workers of the boundaries (e.g., entrances, adjoining rooms). Keep in mind there may be specific signage requirements for the toxic and hazardous substances present in the workspace. Make sure posted signage complies with any regulatory requirements.

SECURE YOUR BOUNDARIES

Restrict access to regulated areas and transition areas, if possible. Create a list of personnel authorized for entry, and install badge scanners, keypads, or other means to prevent unauthorized workers from simply opening an entrance and entering the space.



ESTABLISH A HOUSEKEEPING PLAN

Generate a detailed housekeeping plan and assign responsibility for carrying out each item listed in the plan. Collaborate with the workers performing tasks in regulated areas to make the plan as comprehensive as possible. Add any items requiring periodic cleaning, including:

- Equipment (e.g., high-efficiency particulate air vacuum)
- Materials (e.g., waste containers, laundry, sticky mats)
- Work environment (e.g., horizontal surfaces, high contact surfaces, ceiling rafters).

Identify the cleaning frequency for each item and create a schedule to perform housekeeping tasks in the required timeframe. Keep cleaning logs to show execution of the plan and schedule. Consider forming a team to spot check your housekeeping practices or include them in periodic self-inspections. Review and update the plan on an annual basis and as changes occur.

PROHIBIT THE USE OF STREET CLOTHING

OSHA defines “street clothing” as the clothing workers wear to and from the workplace. Prohibit the use of street clothes under work garments and protective clothing to prevent cross-contamination. Do not allow workers to take soiled clothing home from the workplace because they can carry contamination home with them. Choose between two options to launder issued protective clothing and work garments at your organization:

1. Utilize a third-party to launder contaminated clothing
2. Launder the clothing in-house.



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Training Topics

- Toxic and hazardous substances present
- OSHA-specific information on toxic and hazardous substances
- Location of regulated and transition areas
- Engineering controls
- Safe work practices and procedures
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements
- Medical surveillance and access to medical records
- Access to training materials and other pertinent information
- Emergency procedures

Coordinate laundry processes with subject matter experts (e.g., environmental, safety, industrial hygiene) to ensure proper handling, signage, and labeling requirements.

ENSURE TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Train workers to safely work within your regulated areas. Provide refresher training and briefings, as necessary, so workers understand the expectations.

Ensure supervisors have a thorough understanding of established rules and requirements related to regulated area so they can serve as safety leaders in your organization. Confirm they understand the importance of enforcing all rules and procedures.

Additionally, educate visitors and contractors (e.g., regulated area workers, contractors, housekeeping staff) on relevant topics to stay safe at your organization.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smscx.org/>.

