

General approach for risk management of carcinogens¹

STOP follows a hierarchy of control. For carcinogens, a step down in the hierarchy is only allowed when technical limitations prevent you from eliminating exposure entirely.

When carcinogens are present at the workplace, employers must do everything in their power to prevent workers from coming into contact with them. Promote a health and safety culture in your workplace!

The first steps when fighting exposure to carcinogens at the workplace should always include:

- Keep in mind that minimum standards for work organisation and safety requirements must be in place at all times. However, these may not be sufficient and further measures might be necessary.
- List all carcinogens used and their quantities
- Gather their safety data sheets.
- Describe the tasks where they are used, making sure to consider all potential process generated carcinogens.
- Identify workers that are potentially subject to exposure and for how long.
- Consider all the above when preparing your workplace risk assessment.

When providing instructions to your workers remember to:

- Always use simple and clear language, short and straight to the point sentences.
- Aim for a clean design in written instructions.
- Include illustrations/schemes when possible.

¹ In accordance with the definition of "carcinogen" in Article 2 a) of the CMR Directive.

Disclaimer: This document is intended to support employers in their decision-making process and does not replace or exclude the need to perform an adequate risk assessment. Please always consider your national health and safety legislation.



More information on www.stopcarcinogensatwork.eu

- Find facts on carcinogens
- Learn about occupational risks
- Find good practices and measures to reduce risks

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S.T.O.P. principle what you need to consider regarding

Personal protection



S.T.O.P. CARCINOGENS AT WORK

This document intends to provide information to support employers in their decision-making process, using the STOP principle. The STOP principle describes the order of priority of protective measures. The employer must observe this order of priority when determining and applying protective measures. **Here we will focus on the fourth level, P for personal protection.** A document for each of the other types of measures is also available. **Please consider S, T and O before P.** Also note that a combination of measures can be used.

The individual letters S-T-O-P stand for different types of protective measures:

S ... Substitution – replace dangerous substances with less dangerous substances or processes. Substitution is always the first measure to consider.

T ... Technical measures – from closed systems to effective air suction, many techniques help to reduce the exposure towards carcinogens dramatically

O ... Organisational measures – may consist of internal policies and/or organisational methods. These measures should only be used to provide additional protection. They should also be considered for emergencies and for workers who carry out regular cleaning and maintenance work.

P ... Personal Protection – sometimes substitution is not possible and technical and organisational measures are not enough. Then you need to use personal protection.

It's easy to remember: S.T.O.P. keeps you safe!



P ... Personal protection

Sometimes substitution is not possible and technical and organisational measures are not sufficient to reduce exposure levels. Then you need to use personal protection. Personal protective equipment (PPE) helps to keep carcinogens away from lungs, skin and eyes. PPE can only be used as supplemental to measures higher up in the hierarchy and considered to be a last resort.

PPE is any equipment designed and manufactured to be worn or held by a person for protection against one or more risks to that person's health or safety.

What should be considered when selecting PPE:

- The hazard properties of the carcinogens present at the workplace.
- The information on PPE available on safety data sheets.
- The results of the workplace risk assessment.
- Worker's individual features, e.g. body height, shoe size.

Using the appropriate PPE for the carcinogens present at the workplace is essential. Keep in mind that often more than one PPE is required.

Selecting the appropriate PPE

Basic guidelines

- Employers must guarantee that PPE are suitable to reduce the occupational risks involved, considering the nature, frequency, and duration of exposure. In doing that they need to consider the adequate protection factor and the potential increase in other occupational risks.
- PPE should properly fit the intended user in order to be effective (be aware that facial hair may compromise a proper fit and function). Ergonomics and worker's allergies (e.g. latex) should also be taken into account. Furthermore, you need to consider under which conditions they will be used, so to decide in accordance.
- Make sure to involve your workers when choosing the most adequate PPE. Comfortable and well fitted PPE will make it easier for workers to use them.
- PPE need to bear a CE marking to indicate that they are in accordance with EU legislation.
- Employers need to make sure that workers are made aware of which personal protection they need to use in each of their tasks, and how to use them properly

Cleaning, storage and maintenance

In working areas where the use of PPE is required you need to ensure that:

- Separate storage places are provided for working or protective clothing and for street clothes.
- Protective equipment should be checked and cleaned after each use and properly stored in a well-defined place.
- Defective equipment is repaired or replaced before further use.
- If PPE are to be reused they should be easy to clean and/or disinfect.

Internal policies should establish the procedures that workers have to comply regarding the protective equipment they need, namely on how to correctly use, clean, maintain and store it.

Specify the PPE

The results of the workplace risk assessment and worker's instructions need to clearly state which PPE are to be used by workers for each task, which means clearly indicating the level of protection of each PPE and their technical specifications. It is not enough to vaguely mention that e.g. gloves are to be used in a given task, it needs to mention the type of glove that are to be used.

Practical advice

- Make sure single use PPE is not reused.
- Keep the different types of PPE (gloves, masks, etc.) to a minimum to increase compliance - a colour-coded system can be used.
- Make sure PPE properly fit each worker's size – loose PPE might increase the risk of exposure and accidents, e.g. if there are rotating parts in the machinery.
- Working with PPE (e.g. respiratory protection) might be demanding and stressful for workers – consider different solutions when selecting the appropriate PPE (e.g. use of powered air-purifying respirator instead of filter masks).
- The material composition and weight of PPE should also be taken into account during the selection process (e.g. prefer natural fibres, avoid heavy working boots).
- When removing the PPE follow the proper procedures to prevent contamination – i.e. how to correctly remove it, in which order and how to store it (e.g. remove protective clothing before removing the respiratory protective equipment (RPE), store the RPE above the clothing and with the opening facing downwards).
- In general, PPE should not be taken home – be aware that contaminated PPE (e.g. clothes, boots) could potentially harm your family members.
- The final cost of PPE includes not only the purchase price, but also the number of times it will need to be replaced.
- Consider wearing cotton gloves under protective gloves to reduce transpiration, if necessary.
- And remember, one size does not fit all workers!