

# TAKE ACTION

## Are chemicals poisoning your business?

How YOU can take action to effectively start controlling hazardous substances in your enterprise.

- USE this leaflet to help develop simple and low-cost improvements.
- EVALUATE the items on the checklist first.
- DECIDE which actions to take.
- TAKE ACTION and IMPROVE your productivity.

## What is control of hazardous substances?

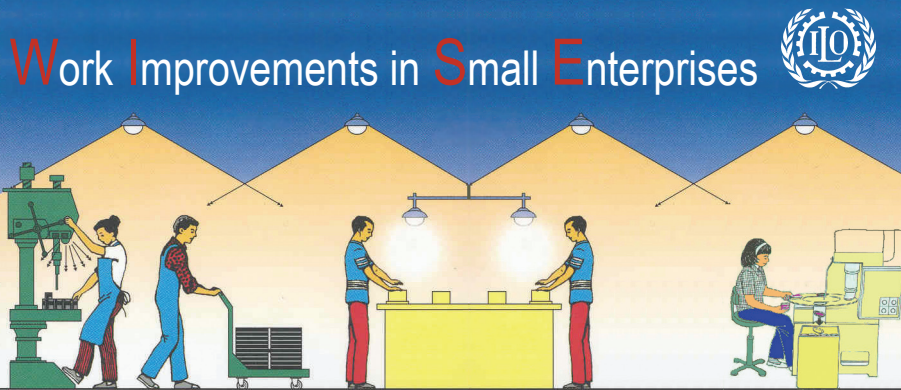
Hazardous substances of one form or another can be found in almost all small and medium-sized enterprises. Exposure to chemicals can be harmful to workers and seriously affect their productivity. Through simple and inexpensive means it is possible to control most of these problems.

## Why control hazardous substances?

- A polluted working environment interferes with efficient production, requires extra inspection and cleaning operations, and may spoil materials or final products.
- Chemical exposure can cause illness, fatigue, headache, dizziness, and irritation of eyes and air passages, thus resulting in increased absenteeism and staff turnover. Younger workers should not be exposed to hazardous chemicals because they can have increased or different susceptibilities to chemicals and may not perceive the hazards correctly.
- Substances evaporating from open containers or dripping from leaky containers or pipes are direct losses that raise your costs.

[www.ilo.org/wise](http://www.ilo.org/wise)

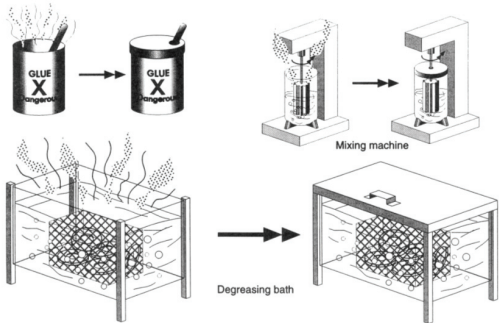
The techniques in this pamphlet are only a few amongst several others that can help to improve your work environment and lead to more productivity. WISE trainers have worked in 44 countries with small and medium enterprises on improving their businesses.



WISE ways to improve your

## CONTROL OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

4  
training  
module



it's easy

it works

it's efficient  
at low costs

with clear gains

## WISE methodology

The following ILO publications provide detailed information on the WISE methodology:

The Action Manual is designed for entrepreneurs and provides ideas for practical action.

The Trainers' Manual that accompanies the Action Manual explains how to organize and carry out the different training events to improve productivity and working conditions.

## Further information

Conditions of Work and  
Employment Programme  
(TRAVAIL)  
Social Protection Sector  
International Labour Office  
4, route des Morillons  
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 799 6754  
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# CHECKLIST

- 1

Substitute hazardous chemicals, such as organic solvents, with less hazardous substances, such as caustic soda or soap. Do you propose action?

No☐Yes☐Priority☐
- 2

Make sure that all organic solvents (paints, glue, etc.) are in covered containers. Do you propose action?

No☐Yes☐Priority☐
- 3

Make sure workers exposed to dangerous substances wash their hands with soap before eating or drinking and that they wash and change clothes before going home. Do you propose action?

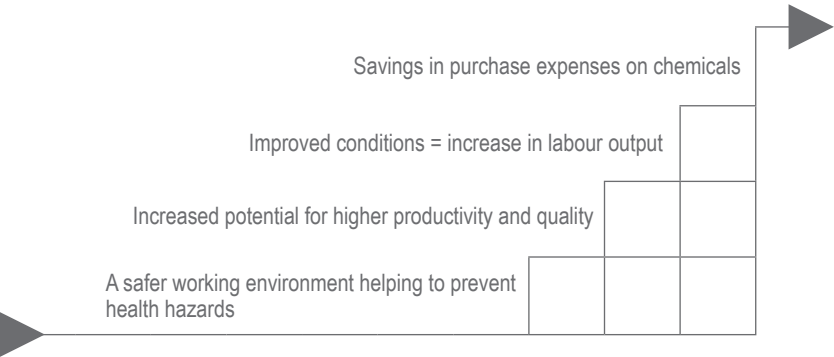
No☐Yes☐Priority☐

These are just a few of the simple and practical checklist items in the WISE Action Manual.

# WISE PROPOSES

- Simple methods to improve control of hazardous substances
- Replace a dangerous substance with one that is less dangerous.
  - Use lids, covers, maintenance and isolation of processes to control hazards and reduce losses.
  - Clean properly – don't spread dust.
  - Use fans properly.
  - Use push-and-pull ventilation.
  - Don't eat at the workplace, except in designated areas, or bring home dangerous substances.

# WHAT YOU GAIN



# A FEW GOOD EXAMPLES

How other companies have improved their productivity and workplace conditions using WISE suggestions



Clear signs in prominent places to remind workers to wear personal protective equipment when dealing with potentially hazardous substances will help to reduce safety and health hazards and financial losses.

To prevent costly mistakes, it is good business practice to put labels in a language that workers understand on all the containers filled with chemicals, even the small secondary containers workers use at workstations.



A flexible vacuum system placed close to the work surface pulls toxic soldering fumes away from the worker's breathing zone, which helps to keep the work area clean and contributes to higher quality products.



HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AND A BETTER PLACE TO WORK