



Chemicals and Professional Use: Protect workers while giving them all options

Cleaners, lab technicians, construction workers and car mechanics have one thing in common: They are trained professionals handling chemicals in their daily work.

They apply these chemicals with a defined purpose: for example, to refill your car with automotive fluids. Or to clean offices and schools. Some of the substances needed are classified as hazardous. How can we make sure they are safe for the people handling and using them?

There are two different approaches to risk

1. The risk principle: it considers both hazard of and exposure to a certain chemical.
2. The Generic Risk Management Approach (GRA): It is much simpler as it bans substances based on hazard properties alone without considering exposure.

Both approaches mean: the user is always safe.

The EU Commission wants to extend the Generic Risk Management Approach from consumers to professional workers – why is this relevant?

With the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability the EU Commission wants to extend the Generic Risk Management Approach

- ▶ From consumers to professional users
- ▶ From CMR substances⁽¹⁾ to additional hazard classes

But: that's great, right? More safety for everybody!

Not so fast: Many substances will be banned from key applications and technologies in daily life and in business. Even though a safe use can be demonstrated! Technologies we need to develop and produce energy saving electric cars. Or to insulate houses to save on heating. Substances might be banned which professionals use to maintain cars, machines, even wind power stations.

In short: the chemical toolbox for professional users will be significantly limited.

What we should not do:

Extend GRA to professional workers. We have better ways to protect them.

What we should do instead:

Strengthen professional workers' safety AND their economic basis.

¹ CMR Substances: classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic for reproduction

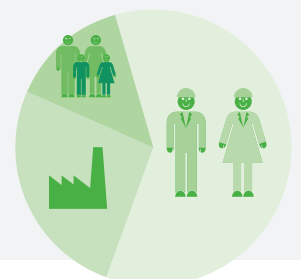
² Source: Ricardo Report

³ The STOP-Principle describes the hierarchy of controls in OSH: Substitution, Technical measures, Organizational measures, Personal protective equipment

⁴ OSH Occupational Safety and Health

Professional workers carry the impact from new policy²

More than every second product potentially affected by the CSS are used today by professional workers (60%; consumers: 14%, industry: 26%).



How is workers' safety managed today?

Professional users have access to much more comprehensive risk management options compared to consumers:

1. Mandatory workplace-specific risk assessment
2. Risk management according to the STOP⁽³⁾-principle
3. Task- and workplace-specific instructions
4. Monitoring the effectivity of risk management measures.

This is how workers' safety can be further improved

1. Provide best practice guidance for OSH⁽⁴⁾ regulations;
2. Ensure adequate expertise of workers in safe chemicals management;
3. Introduce an EU training passport for professionals;
4. Extend EU-OSH regulations to self-employed workers;
5. Set EU-wide Binding Occupational Exposure Limit Values for substances of very high concern.

Remember: The user always needs to be safe, no matter which principle we follow. With our expertise in evaluating and managing risk, however, we can still be open for new universal solutions and much needed technologies.


We create chemistry

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