



ERMA NEW ZEALAND

INFORMATION SHEET

CODE OF PRACTICE HSNOCOP 1-1
NUMBER 23
MAY 2004

Meeting the ‘Exempt Laboratory’ Requirements of the HSNO Act in CRIs and Universities

A quick word about Codes of Practice: What are they and what is their significance?

Codes of Practice are able to be approved by the Authority under Sections 78 and 79 of the HSNO Act. In practice they are approved by the ERMA New Zealand Chief Executive under delegated authority.

Codes of Practice are “how to” documents. They tell you how you can meet the requirements of the HSNO regulations and controls, in a way that is legally defensible. However, they are not mandatory! If you have other ways of meeting the requirements then you can adopt those instead.

Most Codes will be developed by industry or user groups rather than by ERMA New Zealand.

Where can you get a copy of this Code?

Code HSNOCOP 1-1 was developed under the aegis of the University Vice Chancellor’s Committee. However, a hard copy of the Code will be held at reception in our Wellington Office. You can inspect a copy there. It is also able to be downloaded from our website. If you prefer to access a printed copy please contact ERMA New Zealand. Printed copies (bound photocopies) are available at a price of \$15 plus p&p.

What is this Code about and who should use it?

Section 33 of the HSNO Act provides an exemption from getting a HSNO approval for the small scale use of hazardous substances in research or teaching, provided the work is done in a laboratory which meets prescribed requirements. These requirements are set out in the Hazardous Substances (Exempt Laboratory) Regulation 2001.

Code 1-1 tells you one set of ways in which the exempt laboratory requirements can be met. It has been specifically developed for use in CRI and university laboratories. However, it can be used as a guide to good practice in other laboratories as well.

What is in the Code?

It is not feasible to give a full summary of the Code in this information sheet, but the material is intended to give a good indication of coverage.

Definitions

The Code uses a range of phrases which need to be defined. These include phrases like “Laboratory”, “Authorised Person”, “Apparatus” and so on.

Design requirements

Good practice starts with a well designed and constructed facility. The requirements for this are set out in the Code.

Management of Laboratories

It is not sufficient to just have a well designed facility. The people who manage and work in the facility must also be adequately trained and act in a responsible way. This part of the Code sets out the role and responsibilities of the laboratory manager and the Facility Director (slightly different roles) and the training needed. It also describes the knowledge required by people working in the facility.

Use of safe methods

As well as having trained people in a well designed facility, it is important that they use safe methods in handling hazardous substances. Some general methods are set out but the need to develop special methods to handle particularly hazardous substances is also identified.

The Code also covers a number of particular requirements such as the separation of food and drink from chemicals, the use of protective clothing and footwear, use of fume hoods, workplace hygiene, packaging, storage, and dealing with spills. The question of who should have access is also covered, and record keeping.

Dealing with emergencies

Despite the best of practices, things can sometimes go wrong. The Code requires emergency plans to be developed and for these to be regularly tested and reviewed. Plans should include the evacuation of laboratories.

Conclusion

This paper has been prepared by ERMA New Zealand to help you decide whether the Code 1-1 would be of relevance to you. It is **not** in itself a Code of Practice.

ERMA New Zealand Information Sheets

ERMA New Zealand publishes information sheets on a range of topics to provide background information on current issue or proposals being dealt with by the Authority.

All publications may be viewed and downloaded from our website at www.ermanz.govt.nz or may be requested by contacting ERMA New Zealand, P O Box 131, Wellington. Ph +64 4 916 2426 Fax +64 4 914 0433 Email info@ermanz.govt.nz