

Safety Advice | For the Community

GO IN
TUNE IN
STAY IN

This leaflet is published by William Blythe Limited as part of its communication obligations under the COMAH Regulations

William Blythe Limited, part of the Synthomer Group of companies, is an inorganic chemicals manufacturer based in Church near Accrington, Lancashire.

Founded in 1845, it is one of the longest surviving chemical businesses in the UK. The Company manufactures a range of speciality chemical products based on transition metals (copper, tin and zinc) and iodine. The Company's products are used in agro-chemicals, pharmaceuticals, photography, glass manufacture, plastics, pigments and dyestuffs, screen printing, and the production of catalysts and reagents.

At William Blythe we make safety our top priority. We will always strive to conduct our operations in a manner that ensures the safety of our employees, contractors and neighbours and the protection of the environment.

The reason for this leaflet is to provide you with information about the *Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015* (or COMAH for short). Our activities come under this legislation, which mainly applies to the chemical industry, because threshold quantities of certain dangerous substances identified in the Regulations are kept or used on our site. Under COMAH we have a duty to contact everyone within a designated area around the site known as the **Public Information Zone**, to explain what could happen in the unlikely event of a major accident.

Remember the simple rule ...

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Products & Activities at the Site

We use, produce, handle and store a wide range of different chemicals at our Church site, this includes the following types of chemicals:

Toxic Substances



Under the Classification, Packaging & Labelling of Substances & Mixtures Regulations (CLP) these are designated H2 Acutely Toxic substances. These are poisonous if inhaled, swallowed or, in some cases, absorbed by skin contact in sufficient quantities. The majority of our toxic substances are solid, so the risk of off-site effects is very low. However, chlorine, which is normally a gas, is kept as a liquid under pressure. If a major leak developed, a gas cloud could be formed which would be potentially dangerous to persons off-site.

Oxidising Substances



Under the Classification, Packaging & Labelling of Substances & Mixtures Regulations (CLP) these are designated as P8 Oxidising liquids & solids. Chlorine, which is also handled on site, is designated as a P4 Oxidizing gas. These react vigorously with other substances and chemicals and can give off sufficient heat to start a fire. Some can react violently or even explosively with other substances.

Substances Dangerous to the Environment



Under the Classification, Packaging & Labelling of Substances & Mixtures Regulations (CLP) these are designated as E1 & E2 Environmental hazards. If these substances were to enter a watercourse in sufficient quantities, they could kill fish and aquatic plants and animals.

Major Accident Hazards

The main major accident hazards relating to the site could include:

Release of Chlorine Gas

Contact with chlorine gas could cause coughing and irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. In severe cases, it can cause breathing difficulties, which could be delayed by up to 24-hours. In very extreme cases, exposure to high levels over a period of time could cause death. This is why the safety advice given in this leaflet asks you to go/stay indoors until the danger has passed.

Fire or Explosion

Smoke from any fire is dangerous but it is more so if burning toxic substances are involved. Smoke from a fire released during a major emergency could cause eye irritation, coughing and breathing difficulties and possible long-term effects (that is why, in our advice to the public, we ask you to go/stay indoors until the danger has passed). Fire or explosion damage would realistically only be within the

site but, in the extreme, could potentially cause minor damage to adjoining properties. This is highly unlikely.

Environmental Release

An uncontrolled release or spillage of chemicals into the environment (e.g. local streams or rivers) could cause severe effects on wildlife. Such releases could include the fire water used for fighting fires. That is why the Company has robust chemical spill procedures and operates its own effluent treatment plant on site.

The risk of such an occurrence is considered to be extremely low. However, the COMAH Regulations make it perfectly clear that even though the risk of such an incident is low we have a statutory duty to plan for such an eventuality.

How do we Prevent Emergencies?

To reduce the risk of an emergency at the Church site we build in safety measures at every stage of our operations and maintain a fully integrated Safety, Health & Environmental (SHE) management system. We also carry out training programmes to make sure our employees are competent in the duties they have to perform. Inspectors from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency (EA) regularly visit our site to make sure we are working safely and with respect for the environment. In addition to external regulation we also regularly audit (check) our site facilities and the elements of our SHE management system.

Under COMAH the Company submitted a notification (referred to in Regulation 6 of COMAH) and a Safety Report to the HSE and EA, (jointly known as the 'Competent Authority' for the purposes of the Regulations), containing details of all our systems in place to prevent a major incident. This Safety Report has been assessed and accepted by the Competent Authority.

William Blythe is inspected under COMAH regulations by the Competent Authority. Information is available concerning the last site visit and can be accessed on the HSE web site <http://www.hse.gov.uk/comah/index.htm>.

Emergency Planning

In the unlikely event of a major accident occurring, our own **On-Site Emergency Plan** would be put into action. William Blythe has produced the plan in liaison with the emergency services. In addition to our on-site plan, Lancashire County Council's Emergency Planning Department has prepared an **Off-Site Emergency Plan** to deal with chemical emergencies that could affect the area outside our site. This plan gives details of the actions that the Council, the emergency services and other agencies would take to protect you and your property.

How will I know if there is an Emergency?

In the event of a COMAH incident a high intensity siren will sound if any emergency on our site could affect the local community. This siren is much louder than our on-site alarms and can be heard over a wide area. If you hear this alarm at any time for more than a few seconds, follow the **Public Safety Instructions** contained in this leaflet. At the same time, we will activate the off site emergency plan, which will involve all the emergency services. **The siren is tested on the first Monday of every month at 12:00 p.m. (excluding bank holidays). This test will be heard for just a few seconds and you need take no action during a test.** (Please note, that it was previously tested twice a year therefore you will hear it more frequently).

Further Information

In summary, we simply want to make sure that you are well prepared and that you know what to do in the very unlikely event of a major accident. We are well aware that reading about 'emergency instructions' can raise concerns, but, as we have stressed, there is no need to be alarmed.

Further information on COMAH can be obtained from the HSE or EA. Alternatively, if you would like more information on the Off-Site Emergency Plan, please contact **Hyndburn Borough** or **Lancashire County Council Emergency Planning Units**. Further copies of this leaflet and an accompanying covering letter are available from our Safety, Health & Environment Manager [Steve Barker]
- T: **(01254) 320279** or can be downloaded from our website at **www.williamblythe.com**.

PUBLIC SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

What you should do in the event of a major incident at our site

1. IF AN EMERGENCY OCCURS



You will hear a loud siren (continuous alarm tone). The Police may also give warnings by loud-hailer. If you hear the alarm follow these instructions:

2. GO TO A SAFE PLACE



Go indoors immediately and be prepared to offer shelter to others. Do not collect children from school or go out searching for anyone if

they are in the area - they will be given shelter elsewhere. **Do not go out searching for pets.**

3. MAKE THE PLACE SAFER



Close all external doors and windows. Switch off ventilation and central heating systems, block incoming drafts if possible. An upstairs room facing

away from the scene of the incident will give greater protection to occupants. **Do not go into basement areas or cellars (some vapours are heavier than air).**

4. FURTHER INFORMATION



Switch on your radio and listen for public announcements on **Radio Lancashire (103.9, 95.5 & 104.5 FM), 2BR (99.8 FM) and Rock FM (97.4 FM).**

Follow all instructions given by the emergency services. **Do not use the telephone except in an emergency. Do not telephone William Blythe, the emergency services or TV and radio stations. Keep these lines free for emergency use only.**

5. EMERGENCY OVER



Remain indoors until you hear an all clear message or you receive instructions from the emergency services; doors and windows should then be opened to restore ventilation.

If you feel unwell, health advice can be obtained from the **NHS** on **111** or consult your GP or A&E Department at the local hospital.

PLEASE KEEP THIS LEAFLET IN A SAFE PLACE

Householders and persons responsible for business and community premises must ensure that all occupants and visitors are familiar with this safety advice and the precautions they should take. The information should be kept in an accessible place and passed on to any subsequent occupier. Copies should be prominently displayed in business / community premises.

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Excellence in chemistry

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