

How does the planning system deal with hazardous substances?

There are 3 elements to how the planning system deals with preventing and limiting the consequences of major accidents:

1. Hazardous substances consent

This is required for the presence of certain quantities of hazardous substances. This is a key part of the controls for storage and use of hazardous substances which could, in quantities at or above specified limits, present a major off-site risk.

- [The purpose of hazardous substances consent](#)
- [Deciding whether a hazardous substances consent is needed](#)
- [Applying for hazardous substances consent](#)
- [Deciding applications for hazardous substances consent](#)
- [After consent has been granted](#)
- [Breaches of hazardous substances control](#)

2. Dealing with hazardous substances in plan-making

When preparing [Local Plans](#), local planning authorities are required to have regard to the prevention of major accidents and limiting their consequences. They must also consider the long-term need for appropriate distances between hazardous establishments and population or environmentally sensitive areas. They must also consider whether additional measures for existing establishments are required so that risks to people in the area are not increased. Detailed requirements are set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).

Further guidance can be found under [dealing with hazardous substances in plan-making](#).

3. Handling development proposals around hazardous installations

When considering development proposals around hazardous installations the local planning authority is expected to seek technical advice on the risks presented by major accident hazards affecting people in the surrounding area and the environment. This advice is sought from the [Control of Major Accident Hazards \(COMAH\) competent authority](#). This allows those making planning decisions to give due weight to those risks, when balanced against other relevant planning considerations. The competent authority also provides advice on developments around pipelines, licensed explosives sites, licensed ports, developments around nuclear installations and other relevant sites. There are also additional expectations on how local authorities notify people about applications in the vicinity of a hazardous establishment.

Further guidance on development can be found under [handling development proposals around hazardous installations](#).

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