Health and Safety
Executive

Working with Nanotechnology

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What are HSE’s interests?

- To protect people's health and safety by ensuring risks in the changing workplace are properly controlled
- To interact with stakeholders at an early stage
- To achieve sensible health and safety through dialogue, regulation and, where necessary, enforcement

Health & Safety Regulation in the UK

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Notification of New Substances Regulations 1993

Priorities for action

- Engage with researchers and workers in the field.
- Promote a balanced cautious approach
- Reduce uncertainty
- Fill the knowledge gaps
- Review the regulatory framework
- Engage with the public

Public Confidence and Acceptance

- Loss of trust
- Potential loss of ‘the licence to operate’
- Engagement not education
- Public(s) decide if ‘safe’ is ‘safe enough’

Openness & Stakeholder Engagement

- Be clear about what is known and what is opinion
- Share information with the public and each other
- Engage with the public – a true dialogue is needed

What is needed

- Sensible, proportionate and precautionary risk management, so that:
  - We err on side of safety
  - The degree of caution is proportionate to the degree of uncertainty
  - Best health and safety practice is followed
- Research to reduce uncertainty

HSE Interim Information Note

HSE's Research Priorities

- Measurement of nanoparticles and nanotubes
- Control of Exposure in the workplace
- Relating the fundamental properties of materials to hazard (**not** the toxicology of individual substances)

UK Government Approach

- DTI supporting the development of nanotechnology
- DTI commissioned Royal Society/ Royal Academy of Engineering Report
- Coordinated response to Report led by OST and involving all necessary departments
- Central Government research into the hazards and risks of nanomaterials coordinated through a group led by DEFRA