



Certified handlers

Some substances are so hazardous that they must be under the control of someone who is trained and qualified as a certified handler.

You may need to **HAVE** a certified handler

if you are a retailer or PCBU that stores or handles:

- Acutely toxic (class 6.1A and 6.1B) substances, and/or
- Substances that require a controlled substance licence, such as most explosives, fumigants and vertebrate toxic agents (VTAs)

You may need to **BE** a certified handler

If you work for a retailer or PCBU and handle:

- Acutely toxic (class 6.1A and 6.1B) substances, and/or
- Substances that require a controlled substance licence, such as most explosives, fumigants and vertebrate toxic agents (VTAs)

Examples of substances that need to be under the control of a certified handler are

6.1A	Paraquat, Gramoxone, Counter 20G, Quickphos
6.1B	Agpro Metamitron, Dicarzol 500, Methafos 600, Cannon, Mesurol SC
VTAs	Potassium cyanide, sodium cyanide, 1080, yellow phosphorus, PAPP, MZP

These are just examples. Use the [Hazardous Substances Calculator](#) to find out whether you need a certified handler.

Certified handler certificates are issued by a compliance certifier

If you need a certified handler at your workplace, contact a [compliance certifier](#) who will check that the worker who wishes to become a compliance certifier has had the necessary training.

You may need more than one certified handler to cover shift work, holidays and sick days.

Important to know: Certified handler certificates are issued for a particular hazardous substance or class of substances and for particular phases of the life cycle i.e. manufacture, transport, storage, use or disposal. So if you're certified for storage (such as when you're a retailer) your certificate won't qualify you for using the substance or transporting it.

What you need to know to be a certified handler

To be a certified handler you need to show that you have knowledge, experience and competence to safely handle the hazardous substances your certificate will cover.

- In general you will need to know about:
 - the hazardous properties of the substance including the substance classification
 - the controls set by the Health and Safety at Work (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2017
 - the operating equipment, including the protective clothing and safety equipment, to handle the substance safely
 - how to protect people
 - what to do in an emergency
- You will need workplace training including practice in using any equipment, machinery and PPE that you will use when handling the hazardous substances.
- You will need to keep records of any training or instruction you've had.
- You will need to keep your training and certificate up-to-date. Your certified handler certificate lasts for five years. If you do not renew it you will not be able to continue to work as a certified handler.

Can hazardous substances under the control of a certified handler be handled by someone else?

Yes, provided that the certified handler:

- is present at the location where the substance is being handled
- has provided guidance to the person handling the substance
- is available at all time to provide assistance while the substance is being handled



For more detailed information on certified handlers

The regulations

[Health and Safety at Work \(Hazardous Substances\) Regulations 2017](#)

The guidance

[Certified Handler Requirements](#) (WorkSafe New Zealand)