

Hazardous substances notifications

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **There were 63 hazardous substances notifications in 2013.**
- **Almost seventy percent of notifications were in males.**
- **The majority (80%) of notifications were from unintentional exposures.**
- **For children less than five years old, household agents were the most common cause of hazardous substances injury.**
- **Almost half (48%) of notifications were injuries that occurred in the home.**

Injuries from hazardous substances is an important public health problem

Injuries from hazardous substance exposures in New Zealand are often preventable. A high proportion of these incidents are caused by hazardous substances used in everyday domestic and workplace situations. Hazardous substances can cause considerable harm. Symptoms and severity vary widely from case to case. Adverse health effects can be short or long term. Headaches, nausea or vomiting and skin corrosion are examples of acute health effects. Chronic health effects include asthma, dermatitis, nerve damage or cancer (MBIE, 2013).

The notification data in this factsheet came from a new electronic reporting system, the Hazardous Substances Disease and Injury Reporting Tool (HSDIRT). This tool was designed for general practitioners (GPs) to notify cases of disease and injury related to lead and other hazardous substances. The HSDIRT has operated throughout New Zealand since late 2013.

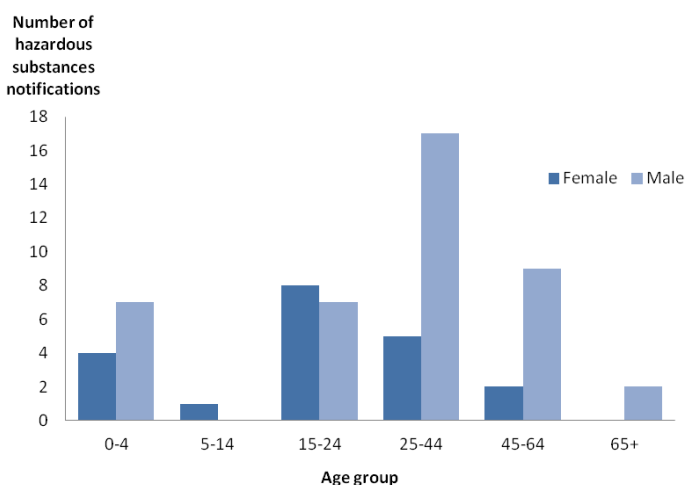
There were 63 hazardous substances notifications in 2013

There were 63 hazardous substances notifications in 2013. This is an average of around five notifications every month.

Males and young adults are the most affected

Almost 70 percent (43 notifications) of hazardous substances notifications were male and the 25-44 year age group had the highest number of notifications (22 cases) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of hazardous substances notifications, by gender and age group, 2013



Source: Hazardous Substances Disease and Injury Reporting Tool (2013)

By ethnic group, European/Other accounted for the highest number of notifications (42 notifications) (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of hazardous substances notifications, by ethnic group, 2013

Ethnicity	Hazardous substances notifications
Māori	5
Pacific	3
Asian	4
European/Other	42
Unknown	9
Total	63

Hazardous substances notifications

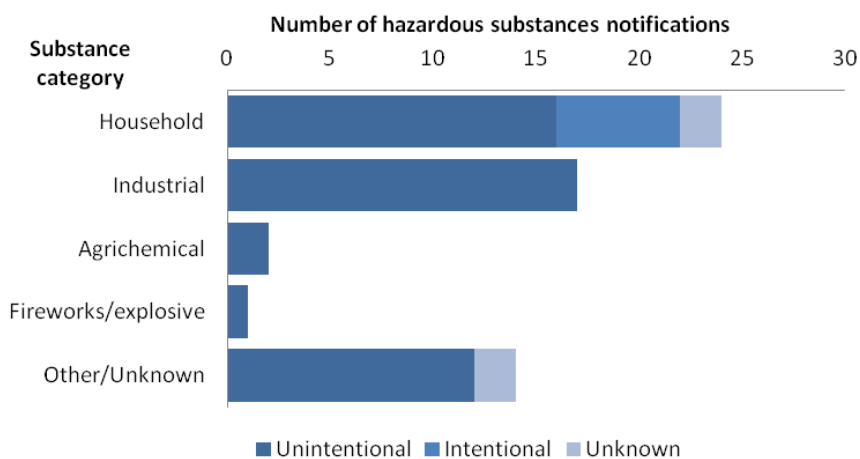
The majority of notifications were unintentional exposures

Eighty percent of all notifications were from unintentional exposures. The most common hazardous substance categories were household chemicals (24 notifications, 41%) and industrial chemicals (18, notifications, 31%).

Children less than five years old were mostly injured from exposure to household products such as dishwashing powder, cleaners, disinfectant, hand sanitiser, isopropyl alcohol and brake fluid. A one-year -old child was admitted to hospital after accidentally ingesting a household cleaner.

Note: Of the 63 hazardous substances notifications, five were assigned as 'Not a Case' by the Public Health Units (PHU). These have been excluded from the graph below..

Figure 2: Number of hazardous substances notifications, by substance category and intent, 2013



Source: Hazardous Substances Disease and Injury Reporting Tool (2013)

Most hazardous substances injuries occurred at home and the workplace

The majority of injuries occurred at home (48%) followed by the workplace (41%). Of the six cases requiring hospital admission, two were workplace exposures. One case was exposed to sodium tripolyphosphate, propylene glycol and benzyl ammonium chloride, while the other case was exposed to epoxy glue.

REFERENCE:

- Ministry for Business, Innovation, and Employment (2013). Work-related Disease in New Zealand. Wellington, New Zealand. 2013.