



TOOL BOX SAFETY TOPIC

HAZARD COMMUNICATION

Introduction

The OSHA standard for Hazard Communication (HAZCOM) is found in 29 CFR 1926.59 Subpart D. The regulation is more commonly known as “HazCom” or “The Right to Know Law”. The standard requires that chemicals in the workplace be evaluated for potential hazards. The potential hazards and appropriate protective measures concerning those chemicals must be communicated to employees. The standard requires this communication to be achieved using a written hazard communication program, labeling system, use of material safety data sheets (MSDSs), and documented employee training programs. You have the right to know what chemicals you are, or may be exposed to.



Hazardous Materials Written Program

The employer must have a written hazard communication program in place for its employees at each worksite. Employees who work with hazardous materials are to be made aware of the hazards. The program is intended to help the employees understand the hazardous materials they are working with and the precautions necessary for the well-being of the employee, the public, and the work site. The written hazard communication program shall include:

- A list of the hazardous chemicals present at your site.
- How the MSDS requirements are being met.
- What type of labeling and other forms of warnings are being used if any?
- Detailed information on training compliance.
- Methods used to inform the employee of the hazards of non-routine tasks.
- Methods used to inform other workers at your site of hazardous chemicals.

Employee Information, Training, and the Right-To-Know

Supervision shall provide training and information to its personnel exposed to hazardous chemicals. This training will be conducted at the time of initial assignment/employment and whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area. Training shall include, as a minimum:

- Employees have the right to know what hazardous materials are present in the work area, the hazards of being exposed to those hazardous materials while working, and how to protect themselves from those hazardous materials.
- Where the written Hazard Communication Program, MSDS sheets, and hazardous substance lists are located.
- An explanation of the labeling system and any other forms of warning used.
- What measures employees can use to protect themselves?
- What methods and observation, such as appearance or odor, that workers can use to detect the presence or release of hazardous materials.
- The use, maintenance and care of personal protective equipment.
- The performance of non-routine tasks involving hazardous substances.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

An MSDS is a fact sheet for a chemical that poses a physical or health hazard. The MSDS must be in English and contain the following information:

- The physical and chemical characteristics of the hazardous chemicals.
- Known acute (rapid) and chronic (long-lasting) health effects and related health information.
- Exposure limits and primary routes of entry.
- Whether the chemical is considered to be a carcinogen.
- Precautions for safe handling and use, emergency and first-aid procedures.
- The name of the organization responsible for preparing the sheet and providing additional information, if requested.
- Trade Name of Chemical/Product

Copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets are to be maintained by the employer and made readily accessible to employees at each job site. If paper copies are not on site, employees must have immediate access to MSDS information through electronic means, phone, fax or other devices on the job site at all times. Employees must be trained in the use of the device and the employer must ensure there is an adequate backup system in place to provide access to MSDSs in case of emergencies, power outages, equipment failures, and on-line delays.



Providing your company's appropriate MSDS's to other Contractors

Under the HazCom rule, the employer is required to have as part of their written program a system for providing appropriate MSDS's to all other contractors working on their property or work site. It is recommended that documentation of any transmittals be retained.

LABELING SYSTEM AND OTHER HAZARD WARNINGS

HMIS stands for Hazardous Materials Identification System. It is a complete labeling program to help comply with OSHA's HazCom standard. It is not a requirement of the HazCom standard. Any labeling system is fine to use, as long as workers are trained how to use and understand the labeling system and are aware of the effects (including target organ effects) of the hazardous chemicals.

Containers of both non-hazardous and hazardous material must be labeled with the name of the product, manufacturer, physical hazards and any health hazards warning. Workers must be trained to recognize what hazards correspond to each hazard code rating and/or symbol.



Empty containers that have contained hazardous material must be handled and labeled the same as full containers until they have been purged of all traces of the product.

Hazardous materials labeling must include the technical names of the primary chemical that make the product hazardous. Refer to the MSDS for the proper shipping name to be used when labeling chemical products.

The employer is responsible for assuring that each of its containers is labeled or marked with the identity of hazardous substance it contains and that it shows the hazard warnings appropriate for employee protection. The hazard warning may be any type of messages, words, pictures, or symbols which convey the hazard. Labels must be legible, in English and prominently displayed. Employers that have employees who speak other languages may add

information in their language as long as the information provided in English language remains intact. Labels must be on all permanent or secondary containers used.

When a chemical is transferred from a labeled container to a portable container and the chemical is intended only for the use of the employee making the transfer during his or her work shift the secondary container does not have to be labeled. However, if the container is transferred to another employee for use it must be labeled prior to transfer.

HAZARD COMMUNICATION Test Questions

1. The Hazard Communication Standard is also known as “The Right-to-Know Law”?
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. A written Hazard Communication Program must be made available to all employees.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Storage containers of chemicals must be labeled with the contents and hazardous warning information.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Labels on containers must be in English.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Employees must be trained in the Hazard Communication policy upon employment and or initial work assignment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. Your employer must have an MSDS sheet, or access to the MSDS sheet information, for every chemical that poses a physical or health hazard at your work site.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Other contractors working at your location are not allowed to have access to your MSDS sheets and are not required to provide MSDS sheets for chemicals they bring to your work site.
 - a. True
 - b. False

1-T, 2-T, 3-T, 4-T, 5-T, 6-T, 7-F

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