



Hazard Communication

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) developed a [Hazard Communication Standard](#) to help protect employees from the hazards of exposures to harmful chemicals while at work. The hazard communication standard can also be known as “HazCom” or “The Employees Right to Know.”

The standard was developed to ensure that a company’s employees are provided with important safety information regarding chemicals used in their work environment. The goal is to reduce illnesses and injuries from chemicals used in the workplace.

Key elements of the hazard communication standard

Aside from making sure there is a written hazard communication program and adequate training, the hazard communication standard has two key elements that companies should follow:

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) - they are developed by the chemical manufacturer to communicate information on the hazards associated with a particular chemical. The SDS also provides guidance on how you can protect yourself from these hazards. An SDS must be available for every chemical used in the workplace.

Labeling - all containers that contain hazardous materials must have labels that clearly identify the material it contains and warn of its potential hazards. Labels should include information such as: product name, signal word, pictograms, etc.

Hazard communication safety training

Protect against chemical hazards

Injuries and accidents due to chemical hazards can be easily avoided with the right preventative actions in place.

- Prior to working with a product, read the container label, review the SDS, and use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Do not remove labels from containers. Doing so could lead to someone unknowingly being exposed to a harmful product. Report all unlabeled containers to your supervisor immediately. This includes labels on cans, boxes, bags, bottles, barrels, cylinders, tanks, and similar storage vessels that contain a hazardous chemical.
- Make sure container labels are legible. If you can't read the label, then the container might as well not be labeled at all.
- Do not pour the contents of a labeled container into an unlabeled secondary container. This includes spray bottles, fuel cans, sprayer tanks, dip pans, or other secondary containers used to contain the product. The only exceptions are if you take the time to first place a label that displays all the required information onto the new container, or mark the information onto the secondary container with a permanent marker. When in doubt, it's always a good idea to check with your supervisor about labeling secondary containers.
- Take the time to look at the label when you pick up a container. Before you use a product, confirm that you are familiar with the hazards of that particular product, as well as the proper procedures for its handling and use.

Following these rules may save you or a co-worker accidental exposure to a harmful chemical. And failure to adhere to these rules could also lead to the company receiving citations and monetary penalties if OSHA finds a violation in the workplace.

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