EMPLOYEE TRAINING

By law, you have the right to learn about the chemicals you work with and how to protect yourself against their dangers. Before you work with any chemical, know:

- The requirements of the standard
- The location of hazard communication program documents and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
- How to read the container labels and MSDS
- The identity and location of work process involving chemicals
- The physical and health hazards; including symptoms of over exposure to the chemical
- How to safely use the chemical and appropriate protective equipment
- How to detect the presence or release of the chemical
- What to do in an emergency, such as an injury or accidental chemical spill

The hazard communication standard is the law. If you feel that the rules are not being followed, or that you have not been provided adequate information to complete tasks in a safe manner, stop what you are doing and contact your supervisor or EH&S. Never let anyone pressure you to perform duties you feel are unsafe or intimidate you into not reporting your concerns.

GETTING ASSISTANCE

EH&S also has available guidelines for conducting hazard assessments and selecting PPE. If respiratory protection is required, contact EH&S to arrange a medical evaluation and fit-testing. EH&S is available to assist with interpreting MSDS, determining the safest ways of using chemicals, as well as locating safer chemicals to reduce workplace hazards, selecting proper PPE and monitoring work environments to determine levels of employee chemical exposures.
CHEMICAL SAFETY

Chemicals can be very useful tools in doing many day-to-day tasks. However, they pose risks to health and safety. Before using a chemical product, it’s important to know:

» What chemicals are in the product?
» What are the hazards?
» What precautions are necessary to use the products safely?
» What should be done in an emergency?

The Hazard Communication standard requires that employees have information about the chemicals they are potentially exposed to during work, as well as safe work practices and protective measures to minimize exposures and avoid chemical-related injuries and illnesses. Much of that information is included on the container label and the material safety data sheets.

CHEMICAL CONTAINER LABELING

Every chemical container must be labeled by the manufacturer or supplier with general information on the potential hazards and how to use the product safely. The label at a minimum must have the: name of the product, name and address of the manufacturer, and the physical and health hazards associated with the product.

Hazard warnings need to reflect physical hazards such as flammability, corrosiveness, or reactivity. Health hazards also need to be communicated including specifics on how employees may be affected by chemical exposure.

Never use a chemical from an unlabeled container. If the label is missing or unreadable, report it to your supervisor immediately.

Never remove or deface existing container labels unless the container is immediately labeled with required information.

Never place a chemical in a food or drink container.

SECONDARY CONTAINERS

When a chemical is transferred to a secondary container from the original container, two items must be transferred to the label of the new container: the name of the chemical and the hazard warning. To prevent injury, it is recommended that the chemical identity and hazard warnings be copied verbatim from the original label.

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS

(MSDS) Prepared by the chemical manufacturer or supplier, MSDS provide detailed safety and health information not found on container labels. With this information, supervisors/employees can determine necessary controls such as ventilation, work conditions, and procedures for using chemicals safely; as-well-as protective equipment needed to prevent worker contact with hazardous chemicals. MSDS can also be used to compare products available for a particular job to determine which product is the safest to use.

MSDS should be maintained and readily available where hazardous chemicals are used or stored. MSDSs can be obtained from the chemical manufacturer, from EH&S, and from various vendor sites. Always be thoroughly familiar with a chemical before using it.

An MSDS can be in any format, but it must contain some specific information:

» The name of the chemical
» Name, address and phone number for hazard and emergency information
» Chemical and common names of hazardous ingredients
» Physical and chemical characteristics, such as the color and form (solid, liquid, etc.)
» Physical hazards that the chemical can produce under working conditions (flammability, explosiveness, reactions to other chemicals)
» How the chemical can enter the body
» How much of a chemical you can be exposed to safely (exposure limits)
» How the chemical can harm you
» How to tell if you have been overexposed (dizziness, skin irritation, shortness of breath)
» How to protect yourself from being exposed such as personal protective clothing and equipment.
» Chemical Handling and safe use
» Emergency and first aid procedures