



SafetyAlert

We're Serious About Safety

Hazardous Communications Program

Employers are required to have a written Hazard Communication Program (HCP) if their employees may be exposed to hazardous chemicals. Components of the HCP include training, chemical labeling and inventories, safety data sheets, hazard assessments, and exposure controls. Employees have the following right to receive information regarding hazardous substances to which they may be exposed. Below are some key elements of a HAZCOM program.

Safety Data Sheets

Safety Data Sheets (SDS), created by the chemical manufacturer, provides information about a product's safe use. SDS provide workers and emergency personnel with information about physical properties (melting point, boiling point, flash point, etc.), toxicity, health effects, first aid measures, reactivity, storage, disposal, protective equipment, and spill-handling procedures. SDS are required by law to be readily available for every hazardous chemical at each worksite along with an up to date chemical inventory.

Chemical Hazard Assessments

A thorough hazard assessment should be conducted whenever a new job task or hazardous chemical is introduced into the workplace. The hazard assessment should encompass the entire process and identify both real and potential hazards. The evaluation should focus on eliminating or reducing hazards through the use of engineering controls, proper work practices and PPE.

Spill Response and Cleanup

Employers working with hazardous chemicals should always have a spill response plan in place prior to working with hazardous chemicals. As important, workers must be trained how to react and respond or not respond in the event of a spill.

Chemical Storage

The proper separation of chemicals during storage is necessary to reduce the possibility of unwanted chemical reactions caused by accidental mixing. Use either distance or barriers (e.g., trays) to isolate chemicals into the following groups; acids, bases, flammables and oxidizers. Always store chemicals in a well-ventilated area and avoid stockpiling chemicals by purchasing only what is needed. Conduct periodic cleanouts to minimize the accumulation of unwanted chemicals.



GHS Pictograms and Hazard Classes

The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires certain pictograms to be included on manufacturer and supplier labels of chemical containers to warn you of potential hazards of exposure. The use of pictograms is part of the new Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals. See the Beacon GHS Safety Alert.

Chemical Container Labeling

It is extremely important that all containers of chemicals are properly labeled. The HCS dictates the following workplace (in-house) labeling requirements:

- Labels must identify the hazardous chemicals contained therein using either the chemical or common/trade name.
- Labels or other forms of hazard warnings must be legible, in English, and prominently displayed on the chemical container or area of use.
- Labels must contain appropriate GHS hazard warnings and/or signal words. Employee Rights.

For more information, visit OSHA's Hazard Communication website:
<https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/>



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