



**TEAMSTERS**

# **Safety & Health FACTS**

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## **THE OSHA HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD**

29 CFR 1910.1200

### **Material Safety Data Sheets:**

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must show the chemical or common name of a substance, and describe both the possible health effects and the safety hazards. It describes what engineering controls, work practices, and personal protective equipment should be used to protect workers. It describes proper emergency and first aid measures, and procedures for cleaning up spills. It lists any special precautions such as those that might be needed for maintenance and repair work, and the exposure limits set by OSHA or suggested by the manufacturer.

Every employer must have an MSDS for each hazardous chemical in the workplace, except where these chemicals are only handled in sealed containers, or in laboratories. Where a chemical is normally handled in a sealed container, the employer must obtain an MSDS if an employee requests it.

Material Safety Data Sheets must be readily accessible to employees in their work areas during every shift.

Material Safety Data Sheets must also be made readily available to union representatives on request.

(For more information, see the IBT Safety and Health Fact Sheet about Material Safety Data Sheets.)

## **Training and Information:**

Employers must provide employees with effective training and information about the hazardous chemicals in their work area:

- When the employer takes initial steps to comply with this OSHA standard;
- When an employee is first assigned to an area with chemical hazards; and
- Whenever a new hazardous chemical is introduced into a work area.

## **Training must cover:**

- The safety and health hazards of the chemicals in the work area;
- How these chemicals can be detected (such as by monitoring devices, or by smell or appearance);
- What the employer is doing to protect workers from these chemicals, including work practices, emergency procedures, and personal protective equipment; and
- A detailed explanation of the chemical labeling system, MSDS's, how employees can obtain and use this information, and other details of the employer's Hazard Communication Program.

## **Employees must be informed about:**

- The requirements of this OSHA Hazard Communication Standard;
- Any operations in the work area where hazardous chemicals are present; and
- The location and availability to workers of MSDS'S, the list of hazardous chemicals in the workplace, and the employer's written Hazard Communication Program.

(The list and the written program are not required where chemicals are only handled in sealed containers, or in laboratories.)

## **Labels:**

Every container of hazardous chemicals that is shipped must have a label with:

- The identity of the chemical;
- A warning of the type of harm the chemical can cause; and
- The supplier's name and address.

Every container of hazardous chemicals in a workplace must be labeled with the identity of the chemical and appropriate hazard warnings.

*Exceptions include:*

- ♦ Portable containers which do not have to be labeled if they are intended only for the immediate use of the employee who transfers the hazardous chemical into it from a labeled container.
- ♦ Stationary process containers which do not have to be labeled if the employer uses signs, placards, batch tickets, or other written materials which identify the containers and convey the same information.

### **Written Hazard Communication Program:**

Every employer that uses hazardous chemicals must have a written Hazard Communication Program (except where the only hazardous chemicals are handled in sealed containers, or in laboratories). This program must include a list of all hazardous chemicals in the workplace. It must describe how the employer will meet the OSHA requirements for labeling, MSDS'S, training, and information. It must also describe how the employer will inform workers about the hazards of non-routine tasks, and hazards of chemicals in unlabeled pipes.

The written Hazard Communication Program must be made available to employees and union representatives upon request.

### **Exceptions for Sealed Containers and Laboratories:**

In workplaces where the only hazardous chemicals are in sealed containers, employers are only required to comply with certain parts of the standard:

- ♦ Leave warning labels on the containers;
- ♦ Keep copies of any MSDS's they receive, and make these available to employees in their work areas during each shift;
- ♦ Obtain an MSDS on any substance that is handled in a sealed container if an employee requests it; and
- ♦ Provide workers with most of the same training and information that is mandated for workers in other industries.

Similar exceptions also apply to laboratories.