

OSHA HAZARD COMMUNICATION RULE
A SUMMARY
OF
EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

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COMPLIANCE DATE

Employers must be in compliance with all provisions of the rule by May 25, 1986.

CHEMICALS COVERED BY THE RULE

All hazardous chemicals known to be present in the workplace in such a manner that employees may be exposed under normal conditions of use or in a foreseeable emergency.

WRITTEN HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

Employers must develop and implement a program which describes:

1. How the criteria for labeling and other forms of warning will be met.
2. How the criteria for hazardous chemical material safety data sheets will be met.
3. How the criteria for employee information will be met.
4. How the criteria for employee training will be met.

The program must also include:

1. A list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present, using an identity (chemical or common name) that is referenced in the appropriate material safety data sheet.
2. The methods to be used to inform employees of the chemical hazards of non-routine tasks.
3. The methods to be used to inform employees of the hazards associated with hazardous chemicals inside unlabeled pipes in their work areas.
4. The methods to be used to inform contractors of chemical hazards to which they may be exposed.
5. The procedures used in determining the hazards of chemicals evaluated by the employer.

The employer must make the written program available, upon request, to employees, their designated representatives, and OSHA.

LABELS AND OTHER FORMS OF WARNING

1. Employers must ensure that labels or other forms of warning used on containers of hazardous chemicals which are regulated by OSHA in substance-specific standards are in accordance with the standards.

2. Employers must ensure that each container of hazardous chemicals is labeled, tagged, or marked with:
 - a. The identity (chemical or common name appearing on MSDS) of the hazardous chemical(s).
 - b. Appropriate hazard warnings (any words, pictures, symbols, or combination thereof which convey the hazards of the chemical).
3. In lieu of affixing labels to individual, stationary process containers of hazardous chemicals, employers may use signs, placards, process sheets, batch tickets, operating procedures, or other such written material as long as the method:
 - a. Identifies the containers.
 - b. Conveys:
 - (1). The identity of the hazardous chemical(s).
 - (2). Appropriate hazard warnings.
 - c. Makes the written materials readily accessible to employees in their work place.
4. Employers must not remove or deface existing labels on incoming containers of hazardous chemicals unless the container is immediately marked with:
 - a. The identity of the hazardous chemical(s).
 - b. Appropriate hazard warnings.
5. Employers must ensure that labels or other forms of warning are:
 - a. Legible.
 - b. In English.
6. Employers need not apply or affix new labels to comply with the regulation if the existing labels already convey:
 - a. The identity of the hazardous chemical(s).
 - b. Appropriate hazard warnings.
7. Employers need not label portable containers into which hazardous chemicals are transferred from labeled containers and which are intended only for the immediate use of the employee who performs the transfer.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS

The employer must:

1. Have a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical used.
2. Obtain a material safety data sheet from the manufacturer as soon as possible after the receipt of a hazardous chemical that arrives prior to the receipt of a corresponding material safety data sheet.

3. Maintain copies of material safety data sheets for each hazardous chemical in the workplace.
4. Ensure that copies of hazardous chemical material safety data sheets kept in the workplace are readily accessible to employees when they are working.
5. Make hazardous chemical material safety data sheets readily available, upon request, to OSHA.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Employees must be provided with information on hazardous chemicals in their work area:

1. At the time of their initial assignment.
2. Whenever a new hazardous chemical is introduced into the work area.

Employees must be informed of:

1. The requirements of the OSHA hazard communications rule.
2. All operations in their work area where hazardous chemicals are present.
3. The location and availability of:
 - a. The written hazard communications program.
 - b. The required list of hazardous chemicals for their work area.
 - c. The hazardous material safety data sheets for their work area.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Employees must be given training on hazardous chemicals in their work area:

1. At the time of their initial assignment.
2. Whenever a new hazardous chemical is introduced into the work area.

Employees must be given training in:

1. Methods used to detect the presence or release of a hazardous chemical in the work area, including:
 - a. Use of portable monitoring equipment.
 - b. Use of continuous monitoring equipment.
 - c. Visual appearance or odor of hazardous chemicals when released.

2. The physical hazards of chemicals in the work area.
3. The health hazards of chemicals in the work area.
4. Protective measures employees can take to protect themselves from hazardous chemicals, including:
 - a. Established work practices.
 - b. Emergency procedures.
 - c. Personal protective equipment.
5. Details of the hazard communication program, including:
 - a. An explanation of the labeling system.
 - b. An explanation of the material safety data sheet.
 - c. An explanation of how employees can obtain information on hazardous chemicals.
 - d. An explanation of how employees can use hazardous chemical information.

LABORATORY HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

1. Employers must ensure that labels on incoming containers of hazardous chemicals for laboratory use are not removed or defaced.
2. Employers must maintain any material safety data sheets that are received with incoming shipments of laboratory hazardous chemicals and ensure that they are readily accessible to laboratory employees.
3. Employers must ensure that laboratory employees are appraised of the hazards of the chemicals in their workplace.

