

## HAZARD COMMUNICATION

### **OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (HazCom) or Right to Know (29 CFR§1910.1200)**

Employees have the right to know what chemicals they are working with or around, what hazards those chemicals pose and how they can protect themselves from those hazards.

#### **Hazards**

Physical hazards are exhibited by certain chemicals due to their physical properties, such as flammable liquids or solids. Health hazards occur when a chemical brings about an acute (immediate) or chronic (long-term) health effect on exposed employees.

#### **Key Elements of the HazCom Standard**

**Chemical Inventory:** Identifies all hazardous chemicals found in each work area.

**Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs):** Identifies the product and manufacturer, specifies all hazardous chemicals in the product and their exposure limits, describes the danger of the chemical(s) and details the personal protective equipment required to prevent unsafe exposure. These sheets, which are available to all employees, may change periodically so it is a good idea to review them from time to time to ensure you have the most current information.

**Labels:** All containers of hazardous materials must have legible labels in English which identify the hazardous chemical and warn of its potential hazards. Labels must remain in place; if damaged they must be replaced.

**Training:** All employees must be trained to identify and work safely with hazardous materials.

**Written Program:** A written program must be developed which ties all of these components together. The written program is available to all employees. When working in a setting where chemicals are handled only in sealed containers, a written program is not required. Employees should be trained on the location of the chemical inventory, written program and the Material Data Safety Sheets.

#### **Employee Responsibilities**

- ✓ Read the label before using any chemical.
- ✓ Obey all warning signs on the chemical container and those posted in an area where chemicals are used.
- ✓ Carefully follow the instructions for the chemical's safe handling and use.
- ✓ Use required safety equipment.
- ✓ Refer to MSDS for more detailed information.
- ✓ Ask your supervisor for assistance if you don't know what the chemical is or how to handle it safely.

*This Toolbox Talk provides general guidelines for voluntary use by employers and is not intended to provide all necessary safety information and precautions for specific workplace operations and situations. The American Supply Association assumes no responsibility or liability for the use of the information provided.*

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