



# HAZARD COMMUNICATION

Chemicals pose a wide range of health hazards (such as irritation, sensitization, and carcinogenicity) and physical hazards (such as flammability, corrosion, and reactivity). The Hazard Communication Program is designed to ensure that information about these hazards and associated protective measures is disseminated. This is accomplished by requiring chemical manufacturers and importers to evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import, and to provide information about them through labels on shipped containers and more detailed information sheets called safety data sheets (SDSs). All employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces must prepare and implement a written hazard communication program, and must ensure that all containers are labeled, employees are provided access to SDSs, and an effective training program is conducted for all potentially exposed employees.

## IDENTIFYING RESPONSIBLE STAFF

Hazard communication will be a continuing program in your facility. In order to have a successful program, you must assign responsibility for both the initial and ongoing activities that have to be undertaken. In some cases, these activities may be part of current job assignments. For example, Site Supervisors are frequently responsible for on-the-job training sessions. Early identification of the responsible employees and their involvement in developing your action plan will result in a more effective program design. Involving affected employees also will enhance the evaluation of the effectiveness of your program.

## IDENTIFYING HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN THE WORKPLACE

A list of all hazardous chemicals in the workplace is required as part of the written hazard communication program. The list will eventually serve as an inventory of everything for which you must maintain an SDS.

The best way to prepare a comprehensive list is to survey the workplace. The broadest possible perspective should be taken when doing the survey. Sometimes people think of "chemicals" as being only liquids in containers. The program covers chemicals in all physical forms -- liquids, solids, gases, vapors, fumes, and mists -- whether they are "contained" or not.

### HCS Pictograms and Hazards

<b>Health Hazard</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carcinogen</li><li>• Mutagenicity</li><li>• Reproductive Toxicity</li><li>• Respiratory Sensitizer</li><li>• Target Organ Toxicity</li><li>• Aspiration Toxicity</li></ul>	<b>Flame</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flammables</li><li>• Pyrophorics</li><li>• Self-Heating</li><li>• Emits Flammable Gas</li><li>• Self-Reactives</li><li>• Organic Peroxides</li></ul>	<b>Exclamation Mark</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irritant (skin and eye)</li><li>• Skin Sensitizer</li><li>• Acute Toxicity (harmful)</li><li>• Narcotic Effects</li><li>• Respiratory Tract Irritant</li><li>• Hazardous to Ozone Layer (Non-Mandatory)</li></ul>
<b>Gas Cylinder</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gases Under Pressure</li></ul>	<b>Corrosion</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Skin Corrosion/ Burns</li><li>• Eye Damage</li><li>• Corrosive to Metals</li></ul>	<b>Exploding Bomb</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explosives</li><li>• Self-Reactives</li><li>• Organic Peroxides</li></ul>
<b>Flame Over Circle</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oxidizers</li></ul>	<b>Environment (Non-Mandatory)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aquatic Toxicity</li></ul>	<b>Skull and Crossbones</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acute Toxicity (fatal or toxic)</li></ul>

## FOR ENQUIRIES:

YOUR SAFETY DEPARTMENT, LLC

P + 1 888 859 5653

[info@yoursafetydept.com](mailto:info@yoursafetydept.com)

[www.yoursafetydept.com](http://www.yoursafetydept.com)

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Once you have compiled as complete a list as possible of the potentially hazardous chemicals in the workplace, the next step is to determine if you have received safety data sheets for all of them. Check your files against the inventory you have just compiled. If any are missing, contact your supplier and request one. If you have questions regarding the hazard status of a chemical, contact the manufacturer, distributor, or importer.

You should not allow employees to use any chemicals for which you have not received an SDS. The SDS provides information you need to ensure you have implemented proper protective measures for exposure.

**PREPARING AND IMPLEMENTING A HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

A written plan is required at all workplaces where employees are exposed to hazardous chemicals that describes how that facility will implement the program.

The plan does not have to be lengthy or complicated. It is intended to be a blueprint for implementing your program; an assurance that all aspects of the requirements have been addressed.

The written program must describe how the requirements for labels and other forms of warning, safety data sheets, and employee information and training, are going to be met in your facility.

**LABELS AND OTHER FORMS OF WARNING**

In-plant containers of hazardous chemicals must be labeled, tagged, or marked with the identity of the material and appropriate hazard warnings. The Labels must be legible and prominently displayed. If the material is subsequently transferred by the employer from a labeled container to another container, the employer will have to label that container.

It is important to designate someone to be responsible for ensuring that the labels are maintained as required on the containers in your facility and that newly purchased materials are checked for labels prior to use.

**SAFETY DATA SHEETS**

Employers must have an SDS for each hazardous chemical which they use. Employers may rely on the information received from their suppliers.

The role of SDSs is to provide detailed information on each hazardous chemical, including its potential hazardous effects, its physical and chemical characteristics, and recommendations for appropriate protective measures.

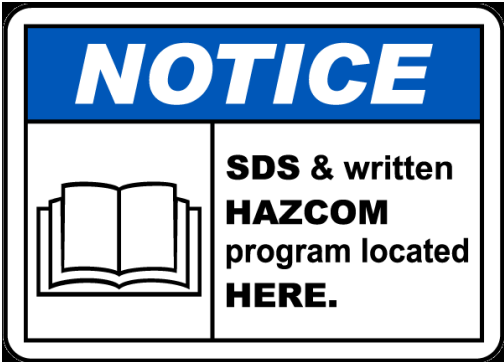
SDSs must be readily accessible to employees when they are in their work areas during their work shifts.

**EMPLOYEE INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

Each employee who may be "exposed" to hazardous chemicals when working must be provided information and be trained prior to initial assignment to work with a hazardous chemical, and whenever the hazard changes.

Information and training are a critical part of the hazard communication program. Workers obtain information regarding hazards and protective measures through written labels and safety data sheets. It is through effective information and training, however, that workers will learn to read and understand such information, determine how to acquire, and use it in their own workplace, and understand the risks of exposure to the chemical in their workplaces as well as the ways to protect themselves. A properly conducted training program will ensure comprehension and understanding.

You must always remember that the purpose of the program is to reduce the incidence of chemical source illnesses and injuries. This will be accomplished by modifying behavior through the provision of hazard information and information about protective measures. If your program works, you and your workers will better understand the chemical hazards within the workplace.





## MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person Conducting Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:**

NAME	INITIAL	DATE

NAME	INITIAL	DATE

**Additional Items Discussed:**

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**Problem Areas or Concerns:**

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**Comments:**

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**FOR ENQUIRIES:**

**YOUR SAFETY DEPARTMENT, LLC**

**P + 1 888 859 5653**  
**info@yoursafetydept.com**  
**www.yoursafetydept.com**

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