



Your Employer Must Tell You About Chemical Hazards

Revised Requirements Under the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard

OSHA updated its Hazard Communication Standard in 2012 to provide better protection to workers. All employers in New Jersey covered by OSHA, as well as public sector employers covered by PEOSH, must comply with the updated standard.

Some of the improvements were made to bring the United States in line with an international system for labels, warnings, and data sheets for hazardous chemicals. That system is called the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labeling, or GHS for short. As international trade continues to expand, it is even more important that workers in each country get standardized information we can understand and use to protect our health and safety.

OSHA made four major changes:

- 1. Hazard classification.** Manufacturers and importers must determine chemical hazards using specific, standard criteria. For example, this will help prevent a chemical from being labeled as cancer-causing in one country but not labeled that way in another.
- 2. Labels.** Chemical manufacturers and importers are now required to provide a label that includes a standardized signal or warning word, pictogram or symbol of the kind of hazard, statement of the hazards, and statement of precautions that should be taken.
- 3. Safety Data Sheets (SDS).** These will replace material safety data sheets (MSDS) and now have a format with 16 specific sections to ensure consistency in communicating important hazard and protection information.

- 4. Information and training.** Employers must have trained workers by December 1, 2013 on the new label elements and safety data sheet format, in addition to the current Hazard Communication Standard training requirements.

By June 1, 2015, chemical manufacturers and all employers must comply with all provisions of the revised standard.

By June 1, 2016, employers must update workplace labeling and hazard communication programs and provide additional worker training for new health or physical hazards.

OSHA's Revised Hazard Communication Standard

The standard applies to any chemical known to be present in a workplace to which employees may be exposed under normal conditions of use or in a foreseeable emergency. Those who must comply include chemical manufacturers, producers, shippers, and end users.

Written Hazard Communication Program 910.1200(e)

Employers must carry out a written hazard communication program that...

- Spells out how labels and other forms of warning methods, safety data sheets, and employee information and training will be provided

- Provides a list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present.
- Details the methods the employer will use to inform employees of the hazards of non-routine tasks, and the hazards associated with chemicals contained in unlabeled pipes in their work areas.

The employer must make the written hazard communication program available, upon request, to employees and their designated representatives, in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.1020 (e).

Exception: In the case of sealed containers (such as in retail trades, warehousing, and truck and marine cargo handling), a written hazard communication program is not required but employers must:

- Ensure labels on incoming containers of hazardous chemicals are kept in place.
- Provide employee access to any Safety Data Sheets (SDS) that are received, and obtain an SDS if requested by an employee even if it did not come with the container.
- Train workers on what to do in the event of a spill or leak.

Labels

1910.1200(f)

Each container of hazardous chemicals used in the workplace must be labeled, tagged, or marked with the following information:

1. *Product identifier:* the name or number used for a hazardous chemical on a label or in the SDS. It provides a unique means by which the user can identify the chemical.
2. *Signal word:* either “Danger” or “Warning.” “Danger” is used for more severe hazards, while “warning” is used for less severe.
3. *Hazard statement(s)* that describes the nature of the hazard(s) of a chemical, such as “Causes damage to kidneys through prolonged or repeated exposure when absorbed through the skin.”
4. *Pictogram(s)* that conveys specific information about the hazards of a chemical.
5. *Precautionary statement(s)* that describes recommended measures that should be taken to minimize or prevent health and safety effects resulting from exposure.

6. *Name, address, and telephone number* of the chemical manufacturer, importer, or other responsible party.

The employer shall ensure that workplace labels or other forms of warning are legible, in English at a minimum, and prominently displayed on the container, or readily available in the work area throughout each work shift.

Labels shall be revised within six months of becoming aware of any new information regarding the chemical.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

1910.1200(g)

Employers must have a safety data sheet in the workplace for each hazardous chemical they use. The SDS must include the 16 sections listed below, in order:

- Section 1. Identification.
- Section 2. Hazard(s) identification.
- Section 3. Composition/information on ingredients.
- Section 4. First-aid measures.
- Section 5. Fire-fighting measures.
- Section 6. Accidental release measures.
- Section 7. Handling and storage.
- Section 8. Exposure controls/personal protection.
- Section 9. Physical and chemical properties.
- Section 10. Stability and reactivity.
- Section 11. Toxicological information.
- Section 12. Ecological information.
- Section 13. Disposal considerations.
- Section 14. Transport information.
- Section 15. Regulatory information.
- Section 16. Other information, including date of preparation or last revision.

The employer must have copies of the SDS and ensure that employees during each shift have ready access in the workplace to the required safety data sheets for each hazardous chemical. Safety data sheets shall also be made readily available, upon request, to employees’ designated representatives.

Employee Information and Training. 1910.1200(h)

Employers must provide employees with information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment, and whenever a new chemical hazard is introduced into their work area. Training and information topics must include:

- A description of any operations in an employee's work area where hazardous chemicals are present, and the location of the written hazard communication program, including the required list(s) of hazardous chemicals and safety data sheets.
- Methods used to detect the presence or release of a hazardous chemical in the work area.
- The physical and health hazards of the chemicals in the work area.
- The measures employees can take to protect themselves from these hazards.
- The details of the hazard communication program developed by the employer, including an explanation of the labels received on shipped containers and the workplace labeling system used by their employer, the safety data sheet, and how employees can obtain and use appropriate hazard information.

According to an OSHA Training Standards Policy Statement issued April 28, 2010, OSHA requires employers to

present information in a manner and language that their employees can understand. If employers customarily need to communicate work instructions or other workplace information to employees in a language other than English, they will also need to provide safety and health training to employees in the same manner. If the employee's vocabulary is limited, the training must account for that limitation. If employees cannot read, telling them to read training materials will not satisfy the employer's training obligation.

Pictograms

Pictograms are graphic symbols that supplement other hazard information workers must be provided. Here is the symbol for each pictogram, the written name for each pictogram, and the hazards associated with each of the pictograms. Most of the symbols are already used for transportation and many chemical users may be familiar with them.

Here is an example of what a label might look like:

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

OXI252
 (disodiumflammy)
 CAS #: 111-11-11xx
DANGER

May cause fire or explosion; strong oxidizer
 Causes severe skin burns and eye damage
 Keep away from heat. Keep away from clothing and other combustible materials.
 Take any precaution to avoid mixing with combustibles. Wear protective neoprene gloves, safety goggles and face shield with chin guard. Wear fire/flame resistant clothing. Do not breathe dust or mists.
 Wash arms, hands and face thoroughly after handling. Store locked up. Dispose of contents and container in accordance with local, state and federal regulations.

First aid

IF ON SKIN (or hair) or clothing: Rinse immediately contaminated clothing and skin with plenty of water before removing clothes. Wash contaminated clothing before reuse.

IF IN EYES: Rinse cautiously with water for several minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present and easy to do. Continue rinsing.

IF INHALED: Remove person to fresh air and keep comfortable for breathing.

IF SWALLOWED: Rinse mouth. Do NOT induce vomiting.

Immediately call poison center.

Specific Treatment: Treat with doctor-prescribed burn cream.

Fire

In case of fire: Use water spray. In case of major fire and large quantities: Evacuate area. Fight fire remotely due to the risk of explosion.

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The revised OSHA Hazard Communication Standard is explained in more detail in a 16-minute [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvQNf1Y7E84) available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvQNf1Y7E84>.



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