



San Diego Services

Hazard Communication I

JUNE WEEK 1

On most jobsites and in most shops, there are plenty of containers filled with chemicals covered by OSHA's Hazard Communication (HazCom) Standard. They should be easy to recognize because they should all be labeled properly. In too many cases though, they aren't labeled, the people who use those materials don't know about the hazards, or they are careless. To reduce the likelihood of chemical burns, reactions, and poisonings, the HazCom Standard requires each employer to develop and implement a written hazard communication program. The standard addresses four key areas: 1) Employee Training, 2) Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), 3) Labels on Containers and 4) Chemical Inventory. Let's spend a few minutes discussing some of the requirements of the HazCom Standard.

The training requirement of the standard obligates your employer to tell you about the program and explain it. Perhaps most importantly, it says that you have to be trained to handle hazardous chemicals safely **before** you use them. Ultimately, it's up to you to understand the instructions and use the information in the program effectively. If you mishandle or misuse hazardous chemicals, you will suffer the consequences. In addition to formal training, you can also learn about chemical dangers and how to avoid them by reading MSDSs and labels.

The MSDS is the one place you can find all the important information about a chemical. It contains information

about how the chemical can enter your body, how to prevent exposure, and what to do if you are exposed, as well as information about flammability, transportation and disposal. MSDSs are the most complete source of chemical information on the jobsite—but they're no good if you don't read them. Every container used to store hazardous chemicals must be properly labeled. Labels are a kind of quick-reference. They are intended to remind you of the hazards. Labels are very useful and required, but they are not a substitute for having, reading and understanding the MSDS. The fourth area addressed by the HazCom Standard is the chemical inventory. This is a list of all of the chemicals used on the jobsite. It is part of, and usually stored with, the hazard communication program.

The purpose of the Hazard Communication Standard is to make your job safer—but the standard itself doesn't protect you. You can only be safe when you and your employer comply with the standard and take the steps to work safely with hazardous materials.

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SAFETY REMINDER

Be sure you know the procedures for cleaning up spills and leaks.

These procedures may be different for different chemicals.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

S.A.F.E. CARDS* PLANNED FOR THIS WEEK:

REVIEWED MSDS #

SUBJECT:

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San Diego Services

JUNE WEEK 2

Hazard Communication II

The federal Right-to-Know Law was created to protect workers who are exposed to materials that may be unsafe or harmful to their health. This law states that, as a construction worker, you have a right to know about any hazardous materials in your work area and how to protect yourself and others from danger when you use these materials. Your employer is required to have a written Hazard Communication Program. It will include information on training, the use of labels on containers, a list of all hazardous materials, and material safety data sheets (MSDSs).

Many of the chemicals found on a construction site may cause blindness, lung cancer, skin disorders, liver disease, respiratory problems, brain damage, and birth defects. With certain hazardous chemicals, even a small spill has the potential to kill. To protect yourself from dangers caused by hazardous materials, you must learn how to read and understand MSDSs. They can provide you with all the important information about each chemical you may encounter on the job.

The MSDS for each hazardous material tells you five important things:

1. The name of the chemical and its hazardous ingredients.
2. The chemical's hazards: how the material can harm you and what to do if you need first aid.

3. The conditions that make the material most hazardous and what can happen if you don't use the material safely.
4. How to protect yourself, others, and the environment from the chemical's hazards.
5. How to dispose of the material once you are done using it.

Employers are required to conduct training for all employees who could potentially be exposed to hazardous chemicals on the job site. Employees also need to take responsibility for protecting themselves on a daily basis by understanding the chemicals they work with and recognizing the potential for serious injury and death. You must be trained in hazard communication before you are exposed to or work with any chemical, when new chemicals are introduced into your work environment, and when chemicals or construction operations change. Make sure you get the training you need and then act on that new knowledge.

Know what to do in an emergency that involves a hazardous chemical. Forethought and planning can save your life.

SAFETY REMINDER

Make sure your MSDS library contains up-to-date information.

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Chemical Labels

JUNE WEEK 3

OSHA's Hazard Communication (Haz Com) Standard covers all workers exposed to hazardous chemicals in all industrial sectors including construction. An important element of the Haz Com standard is labeling of hazardous chemicals. Labels **must be** in English but it would be wise to include other languages that the crew speaks. **Every** container of the hazardous material must be labeled, tagged or marked with the following information: 1) the identity of hazardous chemical, 2) appropriate hazard warnings—words, pictures, symbols or some combination and 3) the name and address of the manufacturer, importer or other responsible party.

Hazard information is often described using the hazard identification diamond, sometimes called the NFPA diamond. These container labels provide essential health and safety information. The diamond consists of four colors. Red identifies a flammability hazard, yellow identifies a reactivity hazard, blue identifies a health hazard, and white identifies a specific hazard. The colored section indicates the type of hazard present. The number (0-4) in each colored section indicates the level of the hazard. Higher numbers indicate greater hazards. For example, in the health hazard section (blue) 4 means **deadly** (can

cause death or major injury despite medical treatment). 3 means **extremely hazardous** (can cause serious injury despite medical treatment). 2 means **hazardous** (can cause injury and requires immediate medical treatment). 1 means **slightly hazardous** (can cause irritation if not treated). And 0 means **normal material** (no hazard).

Make sure you understand the labeling system we use on this site. You should also be familiar with all chemical handling procedures. Make sure all containers are clearly labeled. Always wear the correct PPE. Wash your hands thoroughly after working with chemicals. Never store flammable or explosive materials near a heat source or open flame.

Read all labels and make sure you understand the symbols on them. If you're not clear about any of the terms or information found on the chemical label, check the MSDS or ask your supervisor for an explanation. It's imperative that you understand the hazards...your life depends on it.

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SAFETY REMINDER

Be aware of other chemical labeling systems such as HMIG or Color Bar.

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San Diego Services

Carbon Monoxide

JUNE WEEK 4

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, **deadly** gas. Because you can't see, taste, or smell it, carbon monoxide can kill you before you even know it's there. More than 250 people in the United States alone fall victim to this silent killer each year.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

Carbon monoxide is a by-product of combustion, present wherever fossil fuels like gasoline or diesel fuel are burned. Malfunctioning or improperly vented home appliances, such as gas or oil furnaces, fireplaces, space heaters, wood burning stoves, and water heaters, can also produce it. Fumes from cars and trucks contain carbon monoxide; the concentration of carbon monoxide may become quite high if vehicles are left running in enclosed spaces such as shops or garages.

How does this affect my work?

On a construction site, tools and equipment with internal combustion engines expel large amounts of carbon monoxide. Special attention should be given to where and when gasoline or diesel powered generators and welding machines are used. The same is true for heaters that burn kerosene and propane. Make sure the area is well-ventilated. If you have to work in an enclosed area be sure to direct the exhaust out of the work area. Failing to take these steps can produce a deadly environment.

What should I do if carbon monoxide accumulates?

Increase ventilation or leave the area! High concentrations of carbon monoxide can kill you in minutes. At lower levels of exposure, carbon monoxide causes health problems. Be suspicious of carbon monoxide poisoning if you develop a headache, flushed face, dizziness, or weakness. Get to fresh air at once. Move anyone overcome by carbon monoxide gas to a ventilated area immediately. Perform artificial respiration if necessary and call for medical assistance by dialing 9-1-1. The fire department can use carbon monoxide detectors to let you know when it is safe to re-enter the area.

How can I protect myself and my family?

Have your furnace and water heater checked regularly. Never leave a car running in the garage. Just as you would with smoke detectors, you should install carbon monoxide detectors in your home. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and battery replacement, and remember to test the detector regularly.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Any condition or process that might cause carbon monoxide to accumulate should be reported to your supervisor.

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