

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Basics

Week Number 21 (May 21 - 27) 2017 Edition

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this safety talk, participants will be able to:

- *Understand the importance of an MSDS*
- *Be familiar with the various parts of the MSDS*

Training is a major component of the HazCom standard and an important part of that training deals with a hazardous chemical's Material Safety Data Sheet or MSDS. An inventory of the hazardous chemicals is needed for each jobsite. An MSDS for each chemical on the inventory for that jobsite must be readily available for that site. Ask your supervisor where the MSDSs are located for each jobsite. Keep in mind that the inventory is ever-changing. When new chemicals are introduced to the workplace they will need to be added to the inventory. Make sure you notify your supervisor if you bring a chemical to the site. It along with its MSDS will need to be added.

An MSDS is a detailed information sheet that is prepared and supplied by the manufacturer, supplier or importer of the chemical. It must include the sections listed below with information to assist you in using the chemical safely as follows:

- **Chemical Identity-** this is the name that is used on the chemical's container label. It can be the common or trade name or the chemical name. This section will help you relate the MSDS to the substance being used in the workplace. You can compare the name on the inventory and container label to the names in this section.
- **Physical and Chemical Characteristics-** every chemical has specific characteristics that are unique to it and help identify it. These may include vapor pressure, flash point and melting point. Knowing whether the substance is a liquid or solid at room temperature will better aid you in its identification. This section may also describe color or odor of the substance for identification.
- **Physical Hazards-** these are hazards that can harm the body without coming in direct contact with the chemical. It will identify whether the chemical is explosive, flammable or reactive. Details on flammability such as its lower explosive limit will show how little an amount is needed for a fire to occur.
- **Health Hazards-** these are hazards that cause an individual's health to be compromised. These include any signs and symptoms of exposure and any medical conditions that are recognized as being aggravated by exposure to the chemical.
- **Primary Route of Entry-** there are three ways that a hazardous chemical can enter the body: through contact with the skin, by being swallowed or by breathing it in. The primary route is the most probable way that an individual chemical will enter the body.
- **Exposure Limits-** these are limits to a worker's safe exposure recommended by the chemical manufacturer, importer or supplier.
- **Carcinogenic-** whether the hazardous chemical is listed as a cancer-causing agent by OSHA or several other reporting groups.
- **Precautions for Safe Handling and Use-** any applicable precautions for safe handling and use that are known to the manufacturer or supplier. This will include appropriate hygienic practices, protective measures and procedures for the cleanup of spills and leaks.
- **Control Measures-** these are recognized methods for the controlling of the hazards of a chemical. This includes possible engineering controls, work practices and PPE.
- **Manufacturer, Supplier Information-** the name, address and telephone number of the manufacturer, supplier, importer or responsible party who can provide additional information on the hazardous chemical.

By being familiar with the information on an MSDS, you can help keep safe while working with chemicals on the jobsite.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who is responsible for preparing and supplying MSDSs?
- What should be included in a company's chemical inventory?
- What is the difference between Physical and Health Hazards?