

**WORKING WITH
CHEMICALS / HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**



“RIGHT TO KNOW”

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Life is not as simple today as it was twenty, thirty or more years ago. Significant changes occur weekly that have a profound effect over the way we live, how what we eat, the air and we live we breathe.

One of the more profound changes that has been occurring since the end of World War II is the rapid spread and use of chemicals and substances which we term hazardous. Hazardous because they have physical properties such as being flammable, explosive or unstable; or they produce health effects which might damage the skin, lungs, eyes, etc. Or, they may be carcinogenic.

We all use such products both at home and at work. Every time we fill up our lawnmower or automobile with gasoline, we are using a substance that is a physical hazard (flammable), a health hazard, and it's a suspected carcinogenic causing substance. Every day chores in which we use bleaches, cleaners, ammonia and pesticides all involve hazardous substances. We also are exposed at work.

Most of us have little or no difficulty in working safely with these hazardous substances. But to make your work environment safer, additional information is being provided.

In California, all employees are required to receive training and information regarding hazardous substances they might use or come in contact with in their work. Our District believes it is important for employees to have such information, and has therefore put together this booklet to inform you of your rights and what you need to know to work safely.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Your rights by law are as follows:

- 1) You have the right to receive information regarding hazardous substances to which you might be exposed.
- 2) Your physician or collective bargaining agent also has the right to receive such information to which you may be exposed.
- 3) You cannot be discharged or discriminated against in any way for exercising these rights.

Your supervisor is responsible for informing you of the following:

- 1) The location of, and how to obtain, the District's written program on hazardous substances.
- 2) Any operation in your work area where hazardous substances are present.
- 3) Reviewing with you the contents of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's) of substances you work with. This includes new substances, or revised MSDS's if the new information indicates a significant increase in risk to you.
- 4) How to observe and detect the presence and/or release of a hazardous substance in the work area.
- 5) The physical and health hazards of the hazardous substances in your work area and how you can protect yourself from these hazards. Such measures may include: work practice, protective equipment, or emergency procedures.

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS)

The basic source of information about safety and health is found in the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). An MSDS normally consists of a single piece of paper with the following safety and health information:

- 1) Trade name.
- 2) Chemical and common name.
- 3) Physical and chemical properties such as flashpoint, vapor pressure, and solubility of the chemical.
- 4) The physical hazards such as fire, dangerous reactions and explosions.
- 5) The results of exposure to the substance over a short period (acute), and over a long period (chronic). This would include signs and symptoms of illness and medical conditions which may be aggravated by exposure.
- 6) How the substance may enter the body (through the skin, breathing, etc.).
- 7) The allowable level of the substance in the breathing air to which you may be exposed without wearing protective equipment.
- 8) A notation made if the substance could be carcinogenic.
- 9) What you have to do to work safely with the substance. This includes handling, storage, and protective measures.

- 10) Any known control measures that can be used to protect you from the substance. This could be ventilation or other engineering controls, work practices, or protective equipment.
- 11) What to do in emergencies such as spills.
- 12) First aid measures in case of contact or exposure to the substance.
- 13) The name, address, and phone number of the person who prepared the MSDS, and the date it was prepared.

The Purchasing Department will have copies of completed MSDS's for each substance you might have to use.

Whenever a new or revised MSDS is received by the District, your supervisor will review its contents with you within 30 days.

LABELS ON CONTAINERS

Another part of our **Hazardous Substance Program** involves container labeling. By law, whenever a manufacturer sends, or ships, a drum, box, or container with a hazardous substance, a label must be on the container and it must contain the following information at a minimum:

- 1) The name (identity) of the substance (i.e., gasoline, ammonia, etc.).
- 2) A hazard warning statement (i.e., corrosive, wear rubber gloves and eye protection).
- 3) The name and address of the manufacturer or importer.

As substances are transferred from original containers to other containers, labels must be placed on these secondary containers. This label must contain the following information:

1. The name (identity) of the substance, and
2. A hazard warning statement.
3. The owner of the container, i.e., Chula Vista Elementary School District.

These container labels are reminders for you when you use hazardous substances. They are a very shortened version of the MSDS in that they are telling you what you need to do to keep yourself safe.

If you encounter a container without a label, it is your responsibility to notify your supervisor who will make sure that a label is put on the container.

SUMMARY

Labels and MSDS's are your guides to working safely with hazardous substances. By understanding what you are working with, what potential hazards exist from using the substance and how you can protect yourself, you can make your employment safe and rewarding.

We can't avoid using hazardous substances, but we can use them safely. If you have any questions regarding the information in this booklet, talk with your supervisor and get the assistance you need.

We want your employment to be productive and free from injury and illness.

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