



Safety Tip of the Week

Your Safety Is Our Business®

Volume 2, Issue 20

May 17th, 2015

HazCom - Globally Harmonized System

For many years now, employees could gather limited information about the hazardous chemicals they work with by looking at container labels and reading Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs). However, there was no set format to govern how the companies that produced or distributed those chemicals categorized the hazards of their products or how the labels and MSDS's had to appear. The end result was a confusing mish-mash of information that often failed to help workers quickly discern the hazards of the products they were using.



To address this problem, OSHA recently revised their Hazard Communication Standard to align with the international "Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals," commonly referred to as "GHS." As a result, manufacturers and distributors of hazardous chemicals and products must begin to standardize how they categorize the hazards of their products, as well as the information and format of their container labels and Safety Data Sheets.

Overview of changes:

- "Material Safety Data Sheets" will be replaced by "Safety Data Sheets" (SDSs).
- The new SDSs will be divided into 16 sections with information about the product's chemical hazards appearing in a set order that is always the same for every sheet.
- Container labels will all display mandatory information including a product identifier that is exactly the same as that appearing on the corresponding Safety Data Sheet.
- Container labels will also have standardized "signal words," "hazard statements," and "precautionary statements" to help insure you are alerted to applicable dangers and necessary safeguards you should follow when working with that product.
- All container labels will also display one or more of eight specific "pictograms," which are basically icons that appear in small red boxes that will help you to quickly identify the specific hazard or hazards associated with the product you are using.

HazCom programs will need to be updated, written to reflect the changes in the work environment brought about by the new regulations. Written programs should include how the facility implemented the standard, contain a list of all chemicals, address non-routine tasks, and discuss contractors' responsibilities.

Your Right to Know...It's ALL about SAFETY!!!