HAZARD COMMUNICATION: SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDS)

INTRODUCTION

Safety Data Sheets (SDS), formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), are an essential key to Hazard Communication. Safety Data Sheets are formatted to be consistent with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS), so all chemical SDSs are uniform throughout the world. Employees who work with or around hazardous chemicals are required to have access to and understand SDSs.

CONTENTS

The Hazard Communication Standard, revised in 2012, now requires chemical manufacturers, distributors, and importers to provide new Safety Data Sheets in a uniform format that includes the section numbers, headings, and associated information below.

- **Section 1, Identification** includes product identifier; manufacturer or distributor name, address, phone number; emergency phone number; recommended use; restrictions on use.

- **Section 2, Hazard(s) identification** includes all hazards regarding the chemical; required label elements.

- **Section 3, Composition/information** on ingredients includes information on chemical ingredients; trade secret claims.

- **Section 4, First-aid measures** includes important symptoms/effects, acute, delayed; required treatment.

- **Section 5, Fire-fighting measures** lists suitable extinguishing techniques, equipment; chemical hazards from fire.

- **Section 6, Accidental release measures** lists emergency procedures; protective equipment; proper methods of containment and cleanup.

- **Section 7, Handling and storage** lists precautions for safe handling and storage, including incompatibilities.

- **Section 8, Exposure controls/personal protection** lists OSHA's Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs); ACGIH Threshold Limit Values (TLVs); and any other exposure limit used or recommended by the chemical manufacturer, importer, or employer preparing the SDS where available as well as appropriate engineering controls; personal protective equipment (PPE).

- **Section 9, Physical and chemical properties** lists the chemical's characteristics.

- **Section 10, Stability and reactivity** lists chemical stability and possibility of hazardous reactions.

- **Section 11, Toxicological information** includes routes of exposure; related symptoms, acute and chronic effects; numerical measures of toxicity.

- **Section 12, Ecological information***

- **Section 13, Disposal considerations***

- **Section 14, Transport information***
- **Section 15, Regulatory information***
- **Section 16, Other information**, includes the date of preparation or last revision.

Note: Since other Agencies regulate this information, OSHA will not be enforcing Sections 12 through 15

SDS AND LABELS

Employees may notice that the information on hazardous chemical labels similar to their accompanying SDS. The Hazard Communication standard requires chemical substance labels to be consistent with the information written on the corresponding safety data sheet. Employees may refer to the safety lesson "Hazard Communication – GHS Labels" for more information.

ACCESS

Safety Data Sheets must be readily accessible to employees in their work area for each hazardous chemical, this may be done in many ways. For example, your employer may keep SDSs in a binder or on computers. Employees should ask their supervisor where to find the SDSs applicable to their work and work area.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

- DO NOT handle chemicals until the SDS has been reviewed.
- Make sure there is an SDS for every chemical substance.
- Make sure SDSs are up to date and are presented in the 16-section GHS format.
- Comply with SDS safe use, handling, and storage requirements.
- Inform supervisor if there is no SDS for a chemical substance or if the SDS is not up-to-date.

CONCLUSION

It is important that workers understand and identify various chemicals throughout the workplace and know how to work with them safely. Not only does this eliminate accidents, but also gives workers a greater sense of confidence and peace of mind while working.