



Chemical Hazards

Failure to recognize the hazards associated with chemicals can cause chemical burns, respiratory problems, fires and explosions.

Solutions

- Maintain a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical in your facility.
- Ensure this information is accessible to all workers at all times. It must be in English and can be printed in additional languages as an extra precaution.
- Complete training on how to read and use the SDS and to understand the risks of each hazardous chemical being used.
- Follow manufacturers' SDS instructions for handling hazardous chemicals.
- Follow a written spill-control plan.
- Complete training to clean up spills, protect yourself and properly dispose of used materials.
- Use proper personal protective equipment; adhere to employer PPE requirements.
- Store chemicals safely and securely.

Following a Standard

About 32 million workers work with and are potentially exposed to one or more chemical hazards. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration's Hazard Communication Standard, now aligned with the globally harmonized system, requires employers to train and inform employees of the hazards and identities of workplace chemicals to which they are exposed. The standard establishes uniform requirements to be sure employers and employees know about work hazards and how to protect themselves to reduce the incidence of chemical source illness and injuries.

Harm from Hazards

Chemical exposure may cause or contribute to many serious health effects such as heart ailments, central nervous system damage, kidney and lung ailments, sterility, cancer, burns and rashes. Some chemicals also may be safety hazards and have the potential to cause fires, explosions and other serious accidents.

Toxic substances can enter the body three ways: by breathing it in, swallowing it or absorbing the substance through the skin.

Avoid Health Hazards By:

- Reviewing the product Safety Data Sheet
- Substituting the chemical with one that is less harmful
- Limiting exposure as much as possible
- Staying upwind of hazardous exposures
- Making sure hazard controls such as fans are working
- Wearing proper PPE, such as respirators, long-sleeves and pants
- Promptly reporting health complaints to your supervisor

Source: Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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