

Hazard Communication

The Risk

Employees are exposed to many hazards in the workplace. One of the main exposures is working with chemicals. Hazard Communication (HazCom) is the employee's right to know the hazards and identities of the chemicals they are exposed to in the workplace. HazCom provides a means for employees to have access to the information they need to safely work with chemicals.

OHSA has identified wood dust as a potential health hazard through contact and inhalation. It is also considered a fire and explosion hazard under the Combustible Dust Emphasis Program. A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) should also be developed to address the known hazards of wood dust, including exposure limits and fire / explosion hazards.

The following information will outline some of the best practices to assist in managing the risk associated chemicals in the workplace.

The Controls

Chemical Inventory

An inventory of all chemicals used in the workplace should be compiled and made accessible to all employees.

An approval process for purchasing chemicals should be implemented to ensure that chemicals are reviewed, safer alternatives are explored, etc. Chemicals should not be purchased or brought on the property until they have been through the review process and approved.

All chemicals must have labels in place and must be stored properly.

Safety Data Sheets

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are the main source of information for the chemical being used. Each chemical on the property must have a SDS. The SDS must be accessible at all times by the employees.

Employee HazCom Training

Employee HazCom training must cover the SDS and the correct reading of chemical labels. Training should also cover where to find an SDS, how to report that a label or SDS is missing, etc.

Training should cover emergency reporting procedures in the case of injury to an employee and or a spill of the chemical.

HazCom training should be documented and kept on file. It is recommended that this be kept on file for the employee's duration of employment.

OSHA Regulations for Hazard Communication: 1910.1200

Disclaimer

These "Work Safety Best Practices" are advisory in nature and are provided for informational purposes only. They are intended to assist USIPA's member organizations in identifying workplace hazards and providing a safe workplace. These documents are not standards or regulations, and they create no new legal obligations. Likewise, they are not intended to replace or contradict the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's ("OSHA") standards and regulations or any obligations established by federal or state statute, rule, or standard.