

SAFETY COMPENDIUM – HAZARD COMMUNICATION

Hazard Communication applies to any chemical which is known to be present in the workplace in such a manner that employees may be exposed under normal conditions of use or in a foreseeable emergency. Hazardous chemical means any chemical which is a physical hazard or a health hazard.

Employers shall maintain any material safety data sheets that are received with incoming shipments of hazardous chemicals, and ensure that they are readily accessible during each workshift to laboratory employees when they are in their work areas.

Employers shall develop, implement, and maintain at each workplace, a written hazard communication program which at least describes how the criteria for labels and other forms of warning, material safety data sheets, and employee information and training will be met, and which also includes the following:

1. A list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present using an identity that is referenced on the appropriate material safety data sheet (the list may be compiled for the workplace as a whole or for individual work areas);
2. The methods the employer will use to inform employees of the hazards of non-routine tasks, and the hazards associated with chemicals contained in unlabeled pipes in their work areas;
3. The written hazard communication program shall be available, upon request, to employees, their designated representatives;
4. The employer shall ensure that each container of hazardous chemicals in the workplace is labeled, tagged or marked with the following information:
 - Identity of the hazardous chemical(s) contained therein; and,
 - Appropriate hazard warnings, or alternatively, words, pictures, symbols, or combination thereof, which provide at least general information regarding the hazards of the chemicals, and which, in conjunction with the other information immediately available to employees under the hazard communication program, will provide employees with the specific information regarding the physical and health hazards of the hazardous chemical.
5. The employer is not required to label portable containers into which hazardous chemicals are transferred from labeled containers, and which are intended only for the immediate use of the employee who performs the transfer.
6. The employer shall ensure that labels or other forms of warning are legible, in English, and prominently displayed on the container, or readily available in the work area throughout each work shift.

Employers shall provide employees with effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment, and whenever a new physical or health hazard the employees have not previously been trained about is introduced into their work area.

- A list of all hazardous chemicals used in the facility must be prepared and reviewed annually. Survey the facility and identify what is present and check procurement records.
- There are certain chemicals that the Postal Service has targeted for elimination from the work environment. A few products and materials may contain chemicals that have no suitable available substitute. In these cases, purchase only the minimum quantity to perform the required task at hand. Stock no substantial quantities.
- Management must inform contractors and employees of hazards present in the facility. Upon request, the Postal Service will make available to you MSDSs for hazardous materials the Postal Service uses in the contractor work area.
- Contractors must inform the Postal Service before any chemicals are used. Before materials are brought on site, provide material safety data sheets (MSDSs) and an inventory of materials. For projects that are anticipated to use substantial quantities of hazardous materials, you may be required to provide a routing, storage, and waste disposal plan.