

Safe Working Procedures and Instruction

Labels and MSDS in the Workplace

Understanding MSDS

Chemicals used in the workplace can be classed in four different ways:

- Hazardous substances
- Poisons
- Dangerous goods
- Agricultural / Veterinary

A chemical can be a hazardous substance and/or a poison or any other of these classifications or combination of classifications. Hazardous substances are substances which are harmful to health.

Labels and MSDS in workplaces

Occupational Health and Safety (Hazardous Substances) Regulations specify the legal obligations of suppliers and employers.

Suppliers, including importers and manufacturers, are required to provide labels on containers and MSDS for the hazardous substances they supply.

Employers (including Principals) must ensure that container labels are appropriate and make sure MSDS are accessible to staff and other employees who may be exposed to these hazardous substances.

All hazardous substances used in the workplace must be listed in a central register together with copies of the relevant MSDS. All staff and other employees must have access to this register.

Hazardous Substances regulations also require that Principals provide instruction and training to help staff and other employees understand the information on labels and MSDS and how to apply this information in their work at the workplace.

Reading labels

Reading the label on containers is the first step in getting health and safety information on the chemicals used in your workplace.

It is important to recognise the symbols and read labels so that steps can be taken to protect the health of all those exposed to the substance.

Chemicals classified as hazardous substances have labels that show:

- a symbol or key word indicating the hazard such as:
 - the dangerous goods "diamond"
 - a "signal word" providing a warning about the substance
 - the word "Hazardous" (in red)
- product name
- chemical name(s) of the substance and/or ingredients
- risk information
- directions for use
- safety information
- first aid directions
- emergency procedures
- name and phone number of manufacturer or supplier
- expiry date (where relevant)
- reference to an MSDS

Container Labelling

Labels are required so that the contents of a container can be easily identified. The supplier is responsible for the correct labelling of a hazardous substance.

Hazardous substances should be stored in accordance with the information provided on the Material Safety Data Sheets.

Levels of Associated Risk

Chemicals have been classified under the poisons schedule



classification and the signal heading on the label nominates the poison schedule classification to which that particular chemical belongs.

Moderate risk (level 2):

Activities involving the use of non-scheduled poisons. These chemicals are very slightly toxic and indicated on the label by the cautionary statement:

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

Substantial risk (level 3):

Activities involving the use of Schedule 5 poisons. These chemicals are low to moderate in toxicity and indicated on the label by the signal heading:

WARNING

Followed by the cautionary statements:

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

READ SAFETY DIRECTIONS BEFORE OPENING

High risk (level 4):

Activities involving the use of Schedule 6 poisons. These chemicals are moderate to high in toxicity and indicated on the label by the signal heading:

POISON

Followed by the cautionary statements:

NOT TO BE TAKEN

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

READ SAFETY DIRECTIONS BEFORE OPENING

Very High risk (level 5):

Activities involving the use of Schedule 7 poisons. These chemicals are extremely toxic and indicated on the label by the signal heading:

DANGEROUS POISON

Followed by the cautionary statements:

NOT TO BE TAKEN

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

READ SAFETY DIRECTIONS BEFORE OPENING

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

Reading the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is the second step in getting more detailed health and safety information on the chemicals used and stored.

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is a document prepared by the manufacturer of the product or the supplier. MSDS should clearly state if a product is a hazardous substance.

An MSDS should have arrived with the first supply of a hazardous substance. If an MSDS is not made available you should contact the supplier.

MSDS Content

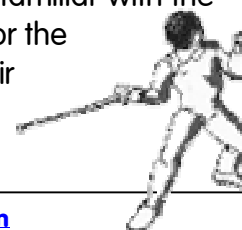
The MSDS will give information relating to:

- the ingredients of the product
- the health effects of the product and first aid instructions
- precautions to follow when you use the product
- safe handling and storage information.

Just because an MSDS has been provided this does not automatically mean that the product is now safe to use. It is important that a risk assessment of the substance is carried out.

Organising MSDS

- Keep copies of the MSDS for each substance used in the workplace and place them in a central register.
- Make sure that the MSDS supplied is complete and is not more than five years old.
- Store the MSDS in a place that is accessible to all staff and other employees.
- Make sure everyone is familiar with the contents of the MSDS for the substances used in their work area.



- All staff, other employees, students and volunteers must be trained in the correct use of hazardous substances.

Using MSDS

Use Material Safety Data Sheets to:

- identify if the product is a hazardous substance
- assist in carrying out risk assessments

You can also use MSDS to:

- find out how to use a product safely
- check that all products are being used in the right way for the right job
- decide whether any improvements should be made to machinery or procedures
- decide whether any monitoring for airborne contamination should be conducted
- check that emergency equipment and procedures are adequate
- develop on-the-job training

Material Safety Data Sheet Format

The format of the MSDS that you receive may be slightly different, but you should expect to find the following information.

- **Statement of hazardous nature:**
"Hazardous according to Worksafe criteria"
- **Date of issue:** Check that it is not more than five years old
- **Manufacturer's or supplier's details:**
 - Company name: address: Telephone number: Emergency telephone number
- **Identification section:**
 - Product names: Other names
 - Manufacturer's product code
 - UN number - *UN numbers apply to substances classified as dangerous goods.*
 - Dangerous Goods class and subsidiary risk
 - Hazchem code - *The Hazchem code is for responding to road emergencies*

- Poisons schedule number
- Packing group

- **Use:**

This part outlines recommended uses or intended use by the manufacturer and methods of application.

- **Physical description and properties:**

This covers a wide range of technical information on properties such as melting and boiling points, flash point and flammability.

- **Ingredients:**

- Chemical name: CAS number
- Proportions

This gives you the chemical identity of each hazardous ingredient.

- **Health hazard information:**

- Health effects: First aid
- Advice to doctor

- **Precautions for use:**

- Exposure Standards
- Engineering controls
- Personal protection:
- Flammability:

- **Safe handling information:**

- **Storage and transport:** Safe storage and transport requirements including any chemical incompatibility.
- **Spills and disposal:** Information on suitable methods to avoid spills, materials to absorb spills and suitable methods of disposal.
- **Fire and explosion hazards:** This includes information for fire fighting and emergency services. Shows the types of fire extinguishers you should use.

