



JOB AID

Hazard Communication

Hazard Communication

The primary purpose of the **Hazard Communication (HazCom) Standard** is to ensure that employers and employees know about work hazards and how to protect themselves in order to reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries due to hazardous chemicals.

The standard covers chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, employers and employees exposed to chemical hazards. It applies to general industry, shipyards, marine terminals, longshoring, construction and healthcare.

Types of Hazards

- **Physical hazards** can cause serious accidents and injuries (ex: flammable/explosive)
- **Health hazards** can affect a person's short-term or long-term health (ex: toxic)

Employer's Responsibilities

- Identify and list hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Obtain Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) and labels for each hazardous chemical, if not provided by the manufacturer, importer or distributor
- Implement a written HazCom program, including:
 - Hazard classification
 - The written program
 - SDSs and labels
 - Training

Hazardous Chemical Inventory

Employers must:

- Identify and list all hazardous chemicals in their workplaces to which employees could potentially be exposed
- Consider chemicals in all forms (liquids, solids, gases, vapors, fumes and mists)
- Identify chemicals in containers (including pipes) and consider chemicals generated in work operations, such as welding fumes, dusts and exhaust fumes

Written Program

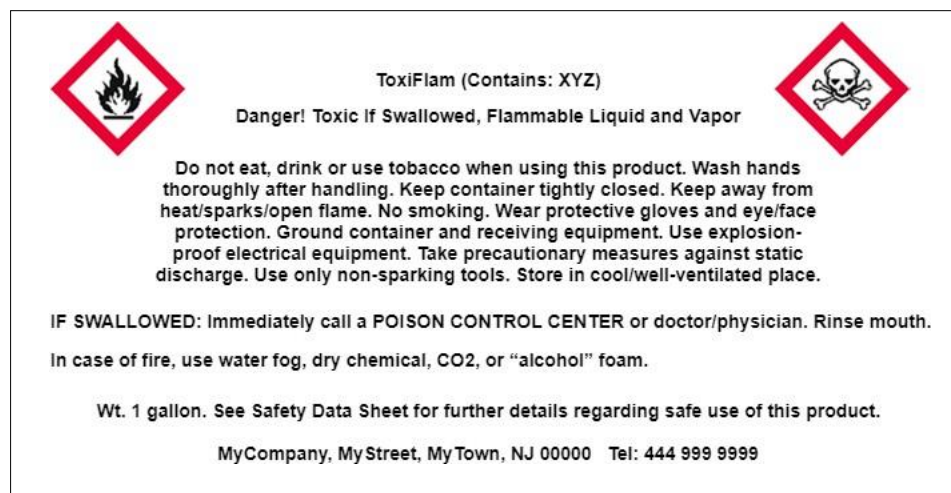
The written program must include all of the following:

- The hazardous chemicals present at the site
- Who is responsible for the various aspects of the program at the location
- Where written materials will be made available to employees
- Multi-employer workplaces

- How the location will meet the requirements for:
 - Labels and other forms of warning
 - SDSs
 - Employee information and training
- How employees will be informed of the hazards of non-routine tasks
- Pipes and piping systems containing hazardous substances or transporting substances in a hazardous state must be labeled according to the standard's requirements

Labels

- Labels must be legible, in English (plus other languages, if desired), and prominently displayed
- Labels include:
 - Product name or identifier
 - Pictograms (symbols)
 - Signal words (“Danger” is more severe than “Warning”)
 - Standardized hazard statements describing the nature of the hazards
 - First aid statements
 - Precautionary statements
 - Name, address and telephone number of the supplier



Rating Systems

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) classification system rates hazards with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest. This is OPPOSITE of the NFPA hazard rating system. NFPA and HMIS rating systems are still permitted for workplace containers.

Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)

- Have a specific 16-section format
- Are to be prepared and provided by the chemical manufacturer, importer or distributor and must describe:
 - Physical hazards, such as fire and explosion
 - Health hazards, such as signs and symptoms of exposure
 - Routes of exposure
 - Absorption (skin contact)
 - Inhalation (breathing)
 - Ingestion (swallowing)
 - Injection (direct entry into the bloodstream through a needle or break in the skin)
 - Precautions for safe handling and use
 - Emergency and first aid procedures
 - Control measures
- Must be in English (other languages are optional) and include information regarding the specific chemical identity and common names
- Must provide information about the:
 - Physical and chemical characteristics
 - Health effects and first aid
 - Carcinogenicity (cancer-causing ability)
 - Identification (name, address and telephone number) of the organization responsible for preparing the sheet
- Must be readily accessible to employees in their work area

Manufacturers must evaluate the hazards of chemicals. If no SDS has been received for a hazardous chemical, the employer must contact the supplier, manufacturer or importer to obtain one and maintain a record of the contact.

Training

Employers must train employees about the hazard communication program:

- Before potential exposure or work with a hazardous chemical
- Whenever the hazard changes
- Whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area

Training must include:

- An explanation of the HazCom program, including information about labels, SDSs, and how to obtain and use available hazard information
- The physical and health hazards of chemicals in the employees' work areas
- What employees can do to protect themselves from these hazards
- How to detect the presence or release of a hazardous chemical