



. OSHA Overview

WHO IS COVERED BY THE STANDARD

As revised on August 24, 1987, the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard applies to all employers with employees who are or may be exposed to hazardous chemicals including:

Manufacturers

Distributors

Institutional/ industrial end users.

WHAT IS A HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL?

Hazardous chemicals are those substances which present health and physical hazards. The term health hazard is defined by OSHA as including but not limited to those chemicals which are irritants, corrosives, sensitizers, carcinogens, toxins, and agents which damage the lungs, skin, eyes or mucous membranes. Chemical products which present physical hazards such as combustibility or flammability are also considered hazardous. Such a broad definition encompasses even seemingly innocuous institutional/ industrial cleaning and maintenance products. Employers will know the product is hazardous if the material safety data sheet list any health or physical hazards or if the label includes a hazard warning. Some of the more common products used in the workplace which may be considered hazardous are:

Bowl cleaners, drain cleaners and rust removers.

These products are generally corrosive to skin tissue because of their acidic nature.

Strippers, cleaners and oven cleaners:

These products are also generally considered corrosive to skin tissue because of their high alkali content.

Paint thinner, ether, and hydrocarbon solvents.

These are examples of common solvents that are classified as hazardous.

Remember, hazardous materials do not have to be harmful to you if you learn which ones are hazardous, what their hazards are and how you can work with them safely.

END USER OBLIGATIONS

Under the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, revised August 24, 1987, institutional/ industrial end users of hazardous industrial chemical products must be in compliance with the labeling, material safety data sheet and employee information and training provisions of the Standard.

NOTE: Your coverage under the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard means that you are also covered under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986.

LABELING

Employers must ensure that each container of hazardous chemical products in the workplace is labeled, tagged or marked, before employees use the product, with the following information:

1. Identity of the hazardous chemical(s).
2. Appropriate hazard warnings; and
3. Name and address of chemical manufacturer, importer or other responsible party such as distributor.

The “identity” of the hazardous chemical on the label can be designation such as a trade name, brand name or generic name. The purpose of the “identity” is to allow cross reference to be made between the label and the MSDS which contain more in-depth product information. Under Federal law, the specific hazardous chemical ingredients are not required to be listed on the label.

The “hazard warning” describes the specific hazard(s) of the chemical product such as whether it is flammable or a skin irritant. However, the label is not intended to contain every hazard or precaution listed on the MSDS. Therefore, before working with a hazardous chemical product, both the label and the MSDS should be reviewed.

Employers must appropriately label portable containers (e.g., spray bottles) into which hazardous chemical products are transferred from labeled containers unless the portable container is intended for the immediate use of the employee who performs the transfer.