



fact sheet

Hazard Communication Program

Employees have a legal right to know about hazardous chemicals to which they may be exposed. Penalties for non-compliance can be severe.

Product Description

OSHA's Hazard Communication (HazCom) Standard is based on the concept that employees have both a need and a right to know about the hazards and identities of the chemicals they are exposed to when working. They also need to know what protective measures are available to prevent adverse effects from occurring. OSHA designed the HazCom standard to provide employees with the information they need to know. Therefore, all employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces must prepare and implement a written HazCom program, and must ensure that all containers are labeled, employees are provided access to MSDSs, and an effective training program is conducted for all potentially exposed employees. The written plan must include provisions for container labeling, employee access to Material Safety Data Sheets and an employee training program. The plan must also contain an inventory of the hazardous chemicals or products in each work area and detail how the employer will inform employees of the hazards associated with these substances.

Regulatory Drivers

The Hazard Communication Standard written by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), also known as "Employee Right-to-Know," was designed to inform and train employees in the proper recognition, use and handling of hazardous chemicals or products. The requirements are codified in 29 CFR 1910.1200 and 8 CCR 5194.

Penalties for non-compliance

Penalties can be as high as \$70,000 for a single 'repeat' or 'willful' violation. Penalties for regulatory violations can be as high as \$7,000.

Employer Activities

Employers must maintain a written plan and train their employees. Training is required at the time of a new assignment and whenever a new hazard is introduced into the work area. At a minimum, discussion topics for employee training must include an explanation of the Hazard Communication Standard, the components of the company's program, discussion of operations in hazardous work areas where exposure to chemicals or products may occur, the location(s) of the written Hazard Communication Plan, contact persons, emergency procedures, the inventory list of hazardous chemicals and products, and the location of the MSDSs within the facility.