

# STAY SAFE WITH SOCIETY

## HAZARD COMMUNICATION AND SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDS)

You and your co-workers have a right to know about hazards in your workplace. The Hazard Communication (HazCom) Standard was created in 1983 to provide workers with the identities of the chemicals they are exposed to while working, as well as the measures they can take to protect themselves. The standard was updated in 2012 to incorporate the Globally Harmonized System, which affects both warning labels and safety data sheets. The HazCom Standard has five main parts: written program, employee training, chemical inventory, warning labels, and Safety Data Sheets or SDS. This handout will focus on SDS.

Chemical suppliers are required to send Safety Data Sheets with the materials you order. The SDS will provide information on: chemical identity, hazard identification, composition/ingredient information, first aid, firefighting, accidental release, handling and storage, exposure control/personal protection, physical chemical properties, stability and reactivity, and toxicological information. The SDS has 16 sections in all, but OSHA focuses only on these 11.

If the material is hazardous, the SDS explains:

- What personal protective equipment (PPE) may be needed to reduce or prevent over exposure.
- How to store the material properly and any materials it may be incompatible with.
- How to handle spills.
- How to extinguish it properly if it catches fire.
- Emergency and first aid procedures for contact, ingestion and inhalation.

Other important aspects of hazardous material you should understand include:

- Reading and understanding the label/pictogram and SDS before use.
- Watching for and avoiding sources of ignition such as welding, cutting, open-flame heaters, dryers, or grinding operations.
- Avoiding skin contact with adhesives and other skin irritants by using suitable gloves and careful work practices.
- Wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment.

### Checklist:

- Develop a written HazCom program.
- Train employees to safely handle chemicals and hazardous materials.
- Know how to read the SDS.
- Keep SDS documents current and readily available.
- Store chemicals in properly marked containers.
- Don't store incompatible chemicals next to each other.
- Use proper personal protection equipment (PPE).
- If you have a question or are unfamiliar with the chemical, ask your supervisor.



**DON'T STORE  
INCOMPATIBLE  
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ALWAYS WEAR PROPER  
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE  
EQUIPMENT.**

A Small Detail  
That Can Make a  
Big Difference.

Risk Control Services, [riskcontrol@societyinsurance.com](mailto:riskcontrol@societyinsurance.com)

150 Camelot Drive, P.O. Box 1029, Fond du Lac, WI 54936-1029

P. 888.576.2438 | [societyinsurance.com](http://societyinsurance.com)

This information is advisory, and it must not be assumed that it has detected all unsafe acts or conditions. This information is designed to assist you in recognizing potential safe work problems and not to establish compliance with any law, rule or regulation.

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