

Hazard Communication and Training



Hazard communication requirements aim to reduce the risk of chemical-related illnesses and injuries by providing essential information to identify and evaluate hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

Tools such as container labeling and safety data sheets (SDS) assist employers in identifying and communicating these hazards.

Key Elements of Hazard Communication

Workplace chemicals present countless hazards, which is why the Hazard Communication Standards exists. The Cal/OSHA standard helps employers understand regulations and ensure employee safety and is composed of five key elements:

1. Inventory of hazardous chemicals
2. System for maintaining SDSs
3. Chemical labels and warning signs
4. Training programs
5. Written hazardous communication program

Inventory of Hazardous Chemicals

Maintain an up-to-date list of all hazardous materials in the workplace. In California, employers must also identify chemicals on the [Proposition 65 list](#), which are known to cause cancer, birth defects, or reproductive harm, and inform employees of these risks prior to the employee being assigned to use the chemical.

System for Maintaining SDS

SDS must be available for all hazardous materials present in a work area, and the information provided in them should be helpful and easily accessible to anyone who needs to get it quickly.

This includes developing procedures for handling situations when an SDS is missing, especially with new chemicals.

Chemical Labels and Warning Signs

Containers of hazardous materials must have labels that identify the material and warn of its potential hazards to employees. Containers of hazardous chemicals in the workplace must include labels with the following information:

- The identity of the chemical
- Appropriate hazard warnings
- The name and address of the chemical manufacturer

Training Programs

Employees exposed to hazardous chemicals must receive training in a language and literacy level they understand before their initial assignment and whenever hazards change. Training should include:

- Information about hazards
- Methods to detect hazards
- How to find and read SDS
- Emergency procedures
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- How to read labels and pictograms

Written Hazard Communication Program

This is a written program that includes procedures for labeling, inventory management, SDS, and employee training. The program should be updated regularly to reflect changes such as new chemicals or PPE requirements.