

4.1: Introduction to Occupational Health and Environmental Controls

Occupational Health and Environmental Controls

1926 Subpart D Occupational Health and Environmental Controls focuses on health hazards and our exposures. It addresses the physical environments in which we may work and establishes standards required for ensuring physical conditions such as sanitation, illumination, ventilation, and noise levels are acceptable for human occupants. It focuses on both physical hazards and chemical hazards. In this chapter we will focus on describing the basis for how chemical health hazards are measured, monitored, and controlled.

Construction workers are exposed daily to thousands of chemicals that are brought onto the jobsite for all types of uses. Workers in other industries such as refineries or power plants or manufacturing facilities are exposed to chemicals as part of processes that exceed threshold levels. Exposure to many of these chemicals can lead to serious health hazards for the exposed worker. The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard was written to ensure that the hazards of all chemicals produced or imported into this country are evaluated and that information regarding any health hazards be transmitted to employers and their employees.

The Hazard Communication Standard provides for three primary means to get information about health hazards into the hands of employers and their employees. The first means is through the use of appropriate labels and other forms of warning. The second is by the use of Safety Data Sheets (SDS). The third is by employee training.

General

The Hazard Communication standard requires that chemical manufacturers and importers evaluate their chemicals and determine if they are hazardous.

Elements of a Hazard Communication Program

Employers shall develop, implement and maintain, at each workplace, a written Hazard Communication Program consisting of at least the following elements:

1. Labels and other forms of warning.
2. Safety Data Sheets.
3. Employee training and information.
4. List of known hazardous chemicals at the workplace.
5. Methods used to inform employees of hazards.

Multi-employer workplaces

On multi-employer workplaces, employers who produce, use, or store hazardous chemicals at the workplace must ensure that the information about these chemicals, in the form of SDS, is available for their employees and any other employees who may be exposed to these chemicals.

Labels and Other Forms of Warning

Labels are required to follow the new globally harmonized system(GHS) and parties have the following responsibilities.

Chemical manufacturer, importer, or distributor responsibilities

The chemical manufacturer, importer, or distributor must ensure that each hazardous chemical is labeled, tagged, or marked with the following information before it enters the workplace:

1. Identity of the hazardous chemical.
2. Appropriate hazardous warnings.
3. Name and address of chemical manufacturer, importer or other responsible party.

Employer responsibility

Once the hazardous chemical enters the workplace it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that each container is marked or labeled with the following information:

1. Identity of the hazardous chemical.
2. Appropriate hazardous warnings such as words, pictures, symbols, or a combination of all three.

Portable containers

For portable containers which are used to transfer hazardous chemicals from one labeled container to the point of use, the containers need not be labeled.

Label requirements

The employer must ensure that the labels, and any other forms of warning, are written in English and are prominently displayed on the container or readily available in the work area throughout each work shift.

This page titled [4.1: Introduction to Occupational Health and Environmental Controls](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Kimberly Mosley \(ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative \(OERI\)\)](#).

- **3.1: Introduction to Occupational Health and Environmental Controls** by [Kimberly Mosley](#) is licensed [CC BY 4.0](#).