

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Standards

quick guide to hazard communication for general industry

What you should know and not a word more!



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AKOSH Services

The Alaska Occupational Safety and Health program (AKOSH) offers a wide variety of safety and health services to employers and employees:

Consultative Services

- ❖ Offers no-cost, on-site safety and health assistance to help Alaska employers recognize and correct workplace safety and health problems. For assistance contact us at (800) 656-4972
- ❖ Provides consultations in the areas of safety, industrial hygiene, ergonomics, occupational safety and health programs, assistance to new businesses, the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP), and the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP)

Enforcement

- ❖ Offers pre-job conferences for mobile employers in industries such as logging and construction
- ❖ Inspects places of employment for occupational safety and health hazards and investigates workplace complaints and accidents
- ❖ Provides abatement assistance to employers who have received citations and provides compliance and technical assistance by phone

Appeals, Informal Conferences

- ❖ Provides the opportunity for employers to hold informal meetings with AKOSH on concerns about workplace safety and health alleged violations
- ❖ Discusses AKOSH's requirements and clarifies workplace safety or health violations
- ❖ Discusses abatement dates and negotiates settlement agreements to resolve disputed citations

Standards and Technical Resources

- ❖ Develops, interprets, and provides technical advice on safety and health standards
- ❖ Provides copies of all AKOSH occupational safety and health standards

Public Education and Conferences

- ❖ Conducts conferences, seminars, workshops, and rule forums
 - ❖ Coordinates and provides technical training on topics such as confined space, ergonomics, lockout/tagout, and excavations
 - ❖ Provides workshops covering management of basic safety and health programs, safety committees, accident investigation, and job safety analysis
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For more information call the AKOSH office nearest you.

Anchorage Office

1251 Muldoon Road, Suite 109

Anchorage, AK 99504

Phone: (907) 269-4955

Toll-free: (800) 656-4972

Fax: (907) 269-4950

Web site: <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/lss/oshhome.htm>

Juneau Office

1111 W 8th Street, Suite 304

Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-4855

Fax: (907) 465-6012

Fairbanks Office

675 7th Avenue, Station J1

Fairbanks, AK 99701-4596

Phone: (907) 451-2888

Fax: (907) 451-2885

Wasilla Office

877 W. Commercial Drive

Wasilla, AK 99654

Phone: (907) 352-4180

Fax: (907) 352-4182

What is hazard communication?

The essence of hazard communication is a warning. We use thousands of chemical products throughout our lives but most of us couldn't tell safe ones from hazardous ones without a warning – the familiar skull and crossbones, for example. The warning tells us the chemicals in a product can harm us if we don't use it properly.

Why do we have workplace hazard communication rules?

The rules make sure that workers who use hazardous chemicals know how the chemicals can harm them and how to use them safely.

Who's affected by the rules?

The rules are listed in 29 CFR 1926.59, 29 CFR 1910.1200, and 8 AAC 61.1110.

Understanding the hazard communication process

Hazard communication is a process that involves chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, and you.

Steps in the hazard communication process	
1	Chemical manufacturers or importers determine if the chemicals they produce are hazardous.
2	The manufacturers or importers prepare material safety data sheets (MSDS) that describe the chemical's hazards. Every hazardous chemical that manufacturers or importers sell must have an MSDS and a label that identifies the chemical and warns of its hazards.
3	Your workplace purchases chemical products from a manufacturer, distributor, or importer.
4	You prepare a written hazard communication plan that identifies the particular hazardous chemicals at your workplace and describes how you will use MSDS, warning labels, and training to inform your employees.



What's the difference between a hazard communication "plan" and a hazard communication "program?"

ANSWER: There is no difference. You can prepare a "plan" or a "program" – they mean the same thing.

What do I have to do to comply?

Prepare a written hazard communication plan (i.e., see Attachment #4)

A hazard communication plan identifies the hazardous chemicals at your workplace and describes how you will inform and train your employees about the hazards.

You must prepare a hazard communication plan if your employees use or may be exposed to hazardous chemicals. There is an example of a written hazard communication plan at the end of this guide (Attachment #4).

How to prepare your plan:

Identify the chemicals that your employees could be exposed to by developing a list.

- ❖ If a chemical is hazardous and an employee could be exposed to it, put it on the list. Include hazardous chemicals in all forms – liquids, solids, gases, vapors, fumes, and mists.
- ❖ Update your list when you introduce new chemicals to the workplace.
- ❖ Make sure there is a material safety data sheet for each chemical on the list.

Determine where you will keep material safety data sheets.

Keep material safety data sheets where they are readily available to all employees. Identify the location if you store them in a paper file. Describe how employees will access them if you store them electronically.

Describe how you will train your employees about the chemical hazards.

Include how employees can protect themselves from hazards associated with each chemical, what they need to know about material safety data sheets and warning labels, and where they can review material safety data sheets.

Describe how you will inform employees who do non-routine tasks about the hazardous chemicals they may be exposed to.

Include a description of the non-routine tasks and what employees must do to minimize exposure.

Describe how you will inform employees about hazardous chemicals in pipes.

Focus on hazardous chemicals in pipes that run through employees' work areas.

Describe how you will inform contractors' employees about the hazardous chemicals they may be exposed to.

Include where employees can find material safety data sheets and how they can recognize warning labels on hazardous chemicals.

Make sure that material safety data sheets are current and readily available for employees to use (i.e., see Attachment #1)

- ❖ You must have a current material safety data sheet (MSDS) for each hazardous chemical product that your employees use or may be exposed to.
 - ❖ Your employees must be able to review material safety data sheets in their work area at any time.
 - ❖ It's OK to keep material safety data sheets in a notebook or on a computer, but employees must be able to get the information immediately in an emergency.
 - ❖ Make sure that your list of hazardous chemicals is current, there's a material safety data sheet for each chemical on the list, and incoming hazardous-chemical containers have material safety data sheets.
 - ❖ In addition to MSDS requirements, an employer must have a Physical Agent Data Sheet (PADS) for each physical agent present in the workplace. "Physical Agent" means heat stress, cold stress, hand-arm (segmented) vibration, ionizing radiation, lasers, noise, radio frequency and microwave radiation, or ultra violet radiation which exceeds the threshold established in the 1995-96 edition of *Threshold Limit Values for chemical Substances and Physical Agents and Biological Exposure Indices in the Work Environment*, published by The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH).
- You don't need to keep material safety data sheets for hazardous chemicals that you're no longer using. However, you must keep records of the chemicals, where they were used, and the years they were used for at least 30 years.
- For information about keeping records, see "Access to employee exposure and medical records," Subdivision 2/Z, 1910.1020(d)(ii)(B).

A material safety data sheet has detailed information about a hazardous chemical's health effects, physical and chemical characteristics, and safe practices for using it.

Chemical manufacturers and importers must prepare a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical product they ship to you. Distributors must make sure that you have a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical product they sell to you.

If possible, only one person should be responsible for managing all the material safety data sheets at your workplace.

Label hazardous chemical containers

Every hazardous chemical container at your workplace must have a legible label, in English, which names the chemical and warns of its hazards. There's an exception for portable containers. Don't remove or deface the labels on containers that you receive from manufacturers, importers, or distributors.

The warning label must identify the chemical

A common chemical name or a code name is acceptable. The label must also include a warning such as **DANGER** or the familiar skull and crossbones.

- **The name on the label must match the name on the material safety data sheet and the name on your hazardous chemical list.**

Portable containers don't need labels if their contents are used immediately

Portable containers are intended for "immediate use." This bit of legalese means that if you're an employee you must not allow anyone else to use the container and you must use the contents during your work shift.

"Immediate use" as defined in Subdivision 2/H, 1910.120:

"the hazardous chemical will be under the control of and used only by the person who transfers it from a labeled container and only within the work shift in which it is transferred."

Examples of portable containers:

- ❖ bags
- ❖ barrels
- ❖ bottles
- ❖ boxes
- ❖ cans
- ❖ cylinders
- ❖ drums
- ❖ reaction vessels

Manufacturers, importers, and distributors must ensure that each hazardous chemical product has a label that includes the chemical's name, a hazard warning, and a contact for more information about the product.



One person should be responsible for ensuring that all containers are properly labeled.

Label pipes that contain hazardous substances

Hazardous substances include:

- ❖ Physical hazards such as combustible liquids or compressed gas
- ❖ Health hazards such as toxic, carcinogenic, or corrosive chemicals

If your workplace has pipes that contain hazardous substances or that are insulated with asbestos-containing material, you must either put warning labels on the pipes or use other methods, such as process sheets or written procedures, to warn employees.

- ❖ The method you use must clearly identify the location of the pipes and the substances in the pipes.
- ❖ Process sheets or written procedures must be readily available to employees in their work areas.
- ❖ Apply labels at the beginning and at the end of continuous pipe runs (at least every 75 feet on pipes insulated with asbestos-containing material).
- ❖ The warning label on pipes insulated with asbestos-containing material must identify the location of the pipes and include these words: **Danger. Contains asbestos fiber. Avoid creating dust. Cancer and lung disease hazard.**
- ❖ If a pipe is above or below the normal line of vision, apply the label above or below the horizontal centerline of the pipe so that employees can see it.

Train employees when you hire them and whenever they're exposed to a new chemical hazard or process

(See Attachment #2, Employee Training Record, and Attachment #3, Training Acknowledgement Form)

Cover the following topics:

- ❖ Where to find and how to read your hazard communication plan, the list of hazardous chemicals, and material safety data sheets
- ❖ Jobs and processes in which hazardous chemicals are used
- ❖ The chemicals' physical and health hazards
- ❖ The meaning of warning labels on chemical containers and on pipes that contain hazardous substances
- ❖ How to recognize emergencies involving hazardous chemicals
- ❖ The procedures, equipment, and work practices that control exposure



Who can train employees?

ANSWER:

Choose a person who understands the topics and knows how to do the training. Forms such as those on the following pages help you document that employees have received hazard communication training.

If you would like more assistance with establishing a hazardous communication program or with other aspects of your workplace safety and health system, contact us at (800) 656-4972.

Example: a material safety data sheet

Material Safety Data Sheet

May be used to comply with OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1200. Standard must be consulted for specific requirements.

U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
(Non-Mandatory Form)
Form Approved
OMB No. 1218-0072



IDENTITY *(As Used on Label and List)*

Note: Blank spaces are not permitted. If any item is not applicable, or no information is available, the space must be marked to indicate that.

Section I

Manufacturer's Name	Emergency Telephone Number
Address <i>(Number, Street, City, State, and ZIP Code)</i>	Telephone Number for Information
	Date Prepared
	Signature of Preparer <i>(optional)</i>

Section II - Hazardous Ingredients/Identity Information

Hazardous Components (Specific Chemical Identity; Common Name(s))	OSHA PEL	ACGIH TLV	Other Limits Recommended	% <i>(optional)</i>

Section III - Physical/Chemical Characteristics

Boiling Point		Specific Gravity (H ₂ O = 1)	
Vapor Pressure (mm Hg)		Melting Point	
Vapor Density (AIR = 1)		Evaporation Rate (Butyl Acetate = 1)	
Solubility in Water			
Appearance and Odor			

Section IV - Fire and Explosion Hazard Data

Flash Point (Method Used)	Flammable Limits	LEL	UEL
Extinguishing Media			
Special Fire Fighting Procedures			
Unusual Fire and Explosion Hazards			

Section V - Reactivity Data

Stability	Unstable		Conditions to Avoid
	Stable		
Incompatibility (<i>Materials to Avoid</i>)			
Hazardous Decomposition or Byproducts			
Hazardous Polymerization	May Occur		Conditions to Avoid
	Will Not Occur		

Section VI - Health Hazard Data

Route(s) of Entry:	Inhalation?	Skin?	Ingestion?
Health Hazards (<i>Acute and Chronic</i>)			
Carcinogenicity:	NTP?	IARC Monographs?	OSHA Regulated?
Signs and Symptoms of Exposure			
Medical Conditions Generally Aggravated by Exposure			
Emergency and First Aid Procedures			

Section VII - Precautions for Safe Handling and Use

Steps to Be Taken in Case Material is Released or Spilled

Waste Disposal Method

Other Precautions

Section VIII - Control Measures

Respiratory Protection (<i>Specify Type</i>)
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Ventilation	Local Exhaust	Special
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	Mechanical (<i>General</i>)	Other
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Protective Gloves	Eye Protection
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Other Protective Clothing or Equipment
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Work/Hygienic Practices

Example: Training Acknowledgement Form

Use a form such as this one to document that an employee has been trained about hazardous chemicals used in the workplace as required by Alaska OSHA hazard communication rules.

I have been informed about the hazardous chemicals that I may be exposed to during my work and I have received training on the following topics:

- ❖ An overview of the requirements in Alaska OSHA’s hazard communication rules
- ❖ Hazardous chemicals present in the workplace
- ❖ The written hazard communication plan
- ❖ How to read labels and review material safety data sheets
- ❖ Physical and health effects of the hazardous chemicals
- ❖ Methods to determine the presence or release of hazardous chemicals in the work area
- ❖ How to reduce or prevent exposure to these hazardous chemicals through use of exposure controls/work practices and personal protective equipment
- ❖ Steps we have taken to reduce or prevent exposure to these chemicals
- ❖ Emergency procedures to follow if exposed to these chemicals

Note to employee: This form becomes part of your personnel file; read and understand it before signing.

Employee: _____ Date: _____

Trainer: _____ Date: _____

Example:

A Written Hazard Communication Plan

Identifying hazardous chemicals

This list identifies all hazardous chemicals used at this workplace. *[Include the list of hazardous chemicals.]* Detailed information about the physical and health effects of each chemical is included in a material safety data sheet; the identity of each chemical on the list matches the identity of the chemical on its material safety data sheet. Material safety data sheets are readily available to employees in their work area. *[Identify where and how employees can use materials safety data sheets.]*

Identifying containers that have hazardous chemicals

All hazardous chemical containers used at this workplace will clearly identify the chemical on the label, and include an appropriate hazard warning and the manufacturer's name and address. No container will be released for use until this information is verified. *[Name of person or job title]* will ensure that all containers are labeled with a copy of the original manufacturer's label or a label that has the appropriate identification and hazard warning.

Keeping material safety data sheets

Material safety data sheets are readily available to all employees. Employees can review material safety data sheets for all hazardous chemicals used at this workplace. *[Identify the file location if they are stored in a paper file. Describe how to access them if they are stored electronically.]*

The material safety data sheets are updated and managed by *[name of person or job title responsible for managing the material safety data sheets]*. If a material safety data sheet is not available for a hazardous chemical, immediately notify *[name of person or job title responsible for managing the material safety data sheets]*.

Example: A Written Hazard Communication Plan, **continued**

Training employees about chemical hazards

Before they start their jobs or are exposed to new hazardous chemicals, employees must attend a hazard communication class that covers the following topics:

- ❖ An overview of the requirements in Alaska OSHA's hazard communication rules
- ❖ Hazardous chemicals present in their workplace
- ❖ The written hazard communication plan, and where it may be reviewed
- ❖ How to read labels and review material safety data sheets
- ❖ Physical and health effects of the hazardous chemicals
- ❖ Methods used to determine the presence or release of hazardous chemicals in the work area
- ❖ How to reduce or prevent exposure to these hazardous chemicals through use of control/work practices and personal protective equipment
- ❖ Steps we have taken to reduce or prevent exposure to these chemicals
- ❖ Emergency procedures to follow if an employee is exposed to these chemicals

After attending the training, employees will sign a form verifying that they understand the above topics and how the topics are related to the hazard communication plan.

Informing employees who do special tasks

Before employees perform special (non-routine) tasks that may expose them to hazardous chemicals, their supervisors will inform them about the chemicals' hazards. Their supervisors also will inform them about how to control exposure and what to do in an emergency.

Examples of special tasks that may expose employees to hazardous chemicals include the following: *[include examples of special (non-routine) tasks]*

Example: A Written Hazard Communication Plan, **continued**

Informing employees about hazardous chemicals in pipes

Before working in areas where hazardous chemicals are transferred through pipes or where pipes are insulated with asbestos-containing material, employees will contact *[name of person or job title]* for the following information:

- ❖ The chemicals in the pipes
- ❖ The physical or health effects of the chemicals or the asbestos insulation
- ❖ The safe work practices to prevent exposure

Informing contractors' employees about hazardous chemicals

It is the responsibility of *[name of person or job title]* to provide contractors and their employees with the following information if they may be exposed to hazardous chemicals in our workplace:

- ❖ The identity of the chemicals, how to review material safety data sheets, and an explanation of the container and pipe labeling system
- ❖ Safe work practices to prevent exposure

This person will also obtain a material safety data sheet for any hazardous chemical a contractor brings into the workplace.