1 - Checking The Label: Safety Training

EH&S – MGA

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:

A. Recognize and understand different chemical label formats.
B. Know how to use label information to identify chemical hazards and protections.

OSHA Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.1200

1. OSHA’s Hazard Communication Standard Gives You the Right to Know About Chemical Hazards and Protections

2. Chemical Container Labels Are an Important Source of Information
   A. Chemical manufacturers must provide labels with their products.
   B. Employers must make sure each container has a readable label.
   C. Signs, placards, or similar materials may be used instead of labels.
   D. Employees must read the label before using any chemical.

3. The Label Identifies the Chemical
   A. Gives its common and/or chemical name
   B. Gives the name and address of the chemical’s manufacturer or importer

4. The Label Identifies the Chemical’s Hazards
   A. It warns about the chemical’s possible dangers, including:
      1. Physical hazards that could develop if you don’t handle the chemical properly (e.g., fire; explosion; reactivity if exposed to heat, air, water, another chemical)
      2. Health hazards if you’re overexposed to the chemical (e.g., headache, nausea, skin burns, breathing problems, cancer, etc.)
5. A Label’s Hazard Warnings May Use Words, Pictures, Colors, or Numbers
   A. Words may list specific hazards (e.g., flammable, corrosive).
   B. Words may signal level of risk:
      1. DANGER: can cause immediate serious injury or death
      2. WARNING: can cause serious injury or death
      3. CAUTION: can cause moderate injury
   C. Pictures may illustrate hazards (flame for fire, skull and crossbones for poison).
   D. Colors may be used instead of words or pictures:
      1. RED = Fire hazard
      2. YELLOW = Reactivity hazard
      3. BLUE = Health hazard
      4. WHITE = Specific hazard such as acid or corrosive, or the personal protective equipment
          you need to protect against this hazard
   E. Numbers (which are often combined with colors) tell how serious the hazard is:
      1. 0 = Minimal hazard
      2. 1 = Slight hazard
      3. 2 = Moderate hazard
      4. 3 = Serious hazard
      5. 4 = Severe hazard

6. Labels May Also Include Safety Precautions
   A. Safe storage and handling instructions (e.g., Keep away from sparks, heat, or flame.)
   B. Protective clothing and hygiene instructions (e.g., Use eye protection.)
   C. Emergency instructions (first aid for exposure, what to use on a fire or spill)

7. Always Read the Label Before Using or Handling a Chemical
   A. Read the label and then read the MSDS so you have full information.
   B. Obey label warnings and follow their instructions.
   C. Don’t use a substance in an unlabeled container.
   D. Report all missing, dirty, or unreadable labels so they can be replaced.
   E. Don’t cover labels so they can’t be read.
   F. Place labels on portable containers used for chemicals.

Summation: Use Label Information to Work Safely With Chemicals

Exercise your right to know about chemical hazards and protections by reading container labels and taking the proper precautions.