

Safety Data Sheets

The Safety Data sheet (SDS) is a detailed information document designed to provide both workers and emergency personnel with the proper procedures for handling or working with chemical substances. The SDS provides information such as physical and chemical data (melting point, boiling point, flash point, reactivity etc.), toxicity, health effects, emergency and first aid procedures, storage, disposal, protective equipment, routes of exposure, control measures, precautions for safe handling and use, and spill/leak procedures. Information on the SDS aides in the selection of safe products. The SDS is of major importance if a spill or other accident occurs.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires chemical manufacturers and importers to obtain or develop SDSs (29 CFR 1910.1200 (g)) on each chemical they sell. The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires us to maintain a SDS file for each chemical in the workplace and to make sure they are "readily accessible during each work shift to employees when they are in their work area(s)."

The SDS is also a required part of Hazard Communication Training.

If you are unable to find a SDS from the source where the chemical is purchased, we recommend that you contact the nearest OSHA office and file a complaint including complete background information on the situation. They will call and send a certified letter to the supplier to obtain the needed information. If you do not want to do this, there are several websites on the internet that offer SDSs for free. If the product is one that is sold by a certain manufacturer, we recommend searching for the appropriate SDS by visiting that manufacturer's website. If you need additional help, contact Environmental Health and Safety by calling 478-934-3054.

Work area supervisors are required to ensure that employees know how to find information on an SDS and how to make use of that information. They are also in charge of reviewing all new incoming SDSs for health and safety information as well as advising all affected employees of such conditions. Supervisors must also ensure that the SDS files are inclusive of the chemical list for the work area and for sending the RTK coordinator a copy of the SDS for any new chemical introduced into his or her work area. It is the RTK Coordinator's responsibility to maintain a central file of all SDSs in use in the various work areas of the college.

However it is the responsibility of the employees to read and understand the SDSs of any chemicals used on the job.

OSHA's HazCom Standards are LAWS which currently mandate that SDSs must include, at a minimum, the chemical's identity, physical data, physical hazards, health hazards, primary routes of entry, exposure limits, whether that material is carcinogenic or not, precautions for safe handling and use, control measures, emergency and first-aid measures, and revision data. Beyond this, OSHA does not specify the exact format of the SDS. OSHA recommends the ANSI standard form which has sixteen parts (presented below).

1. Identification

2. Hazard(s) identification
3. Composition/information on ingredients
4. First-aid measures
5. Fire-fighting measures
6. Accidental release measures
7. Handling and storage
8. Exposure controls/personal protection
9. Physical and chemical properties
10. Stability and reactivity
11. Toxicological information
12. Ecological information
13. Disposal considerations
14. Transport information
15. Regulatory information
16. Other information

OSHA has also released its own format which presents much of the same information, in similar order, reorganized into eight sections.

The SDS is a great source of information on how to safely use our chemicals.

Always start preparing for a job involving a hazardous chemical with these four steps:

1. Read the Container Label
2. Read the safety data sheet.
3. Follow the instructions and precautions on the safety data sheet.
4. Alert your supervisor if you can't find an SDS or don't understand some part of the information it provides.

If you are not sure about anything, ASK! Your supervisors are there to help you. Do not hesitate to get help.

Rights also come with obligations. You have a right to know AND an obligation to use the information on a safety data sheet to protect yourself and others from chemical hazards.

Only **YOU** can make safety happen.