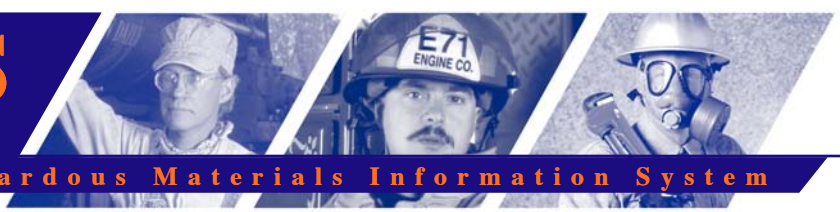
WHMIS
Quick Facts
Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System



MSDS Checklist

Questions to consider when reading an MSDS

An MSDS is a starting point in developing safe handling practices and procedures for a product. It is not a complete source of health and safety information on its own. Always refer to your company's safety rules and detailed procedures for more information. Whenever you use an MSDS, ask yourself the following questions:

Product Identification

Does the product name on the MSDS match the name on the container label? Check for product codes and other identifiers.

Does the description of the material (colour, physical state) match the material you have?

Is the MSDS up-to-date?

Recognizing Potential Hazards

Can this material harm your health?

- What short-term (acute) health effects does the product have?
- Are there symptoms that may warn you of short-term overexposure? Report any symptoms you experience to your supervisor.
- Does the product have any serious long-term health effects?
- Have you told your doctor about the materials you work with, especially if you are pregnant, or wish to have children?
- Have you discussed with your doctor any potential long-term health concerns (for example, liver toxicity, cancer or respiratory sensitization) associated with the material?

Can this material burn or explode? If yes, are fire prevention measures in place?

Is this material unstable (could it decompose or explode on its own)? If yes, under what conditions? Could these conditions occur in your workplace?

Can this material react with other chemicals? If yes, do you work with any of the incompatible substances?

Preventive Measures

Does the MSDS recommend local exhaust ventilation or other engineering controls? If yes, are the recommended controls operating at your worksite?

Does this material require special handling precautions? If yes, have you had worksite-specific training on the safe handling procedures for this material?

Does the MSDS recommend that you wear protective equipment? If yes, do you have the equipment and have you had training on the proper use of this equipment.

Are there specific chemicals that this material should not come in contact with?

Are there special storage recommendations on the MSDS? If yes, have you had worksite-specific training on the safe storage of this material?

Emergency Measures

Do you know what to do in case of a fire or explosion?

Do you know the first aid measures needed in case of an exposure?

Do you know what to do in case of a spill or leak?

Do you know where the emergency response equipment (fire extinguishers, spill cleanup materials) is and how to use it?

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