SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDSs)

What is a Safety Data Sheet (SDS)?

A Safety Data Sheet is a document that contains information on the chemical make-up, use, storage, handling, emergency procedures and potential health effects related to a hazardous material. The SDS contains much more information about the material than the label on the container. SDSs are prepared and written by the manufacturer of the material.

What is the purpose of an SDS?

The purpose of an SDS is to inform you of:

- The material's chemical make-up.
- The material's physical properties or fast acting health effects that makes it dangerous to handle.
- The level of protective gear you need to wear to work safely with the material.
- The first aid treatment to be provided when someone is exposed to the material.
- The preplanning needed for safely handling spills, fires, and day-to-day operations.
- How to respond to accidents.

What information is on the SDS?

There are 9 categories of information that must be present on an SDS. These are:

- Chemical Identity
- Health Hazard Data
- Manufacturer information
- Precautions for Safe Handling and Use
- Hazardous ingredients
- Exposure controls/personal protection
- Physical and chemical properties
- Fire and Explosion Hazard Data

Reactivity Data

Even with all of the above information on an SDS, it might not have everything you need to know about a material. For example, health hazard information is usually presented in general terms. Your health and safety specialist should be able to help you find more information if it is needed.

Why is an SDS hard to read?

Originally, SDSs were intended to be used by industrial hygienists, chemical engineers and safety professionals. Now, SDSs are used by employers, employees, emergency responders and anyone else requiring information on a material. Some SDSs look very different from others. This is because law specifies the content of the SDS, but the format is left up to the manufacturer of the material.

When would I use an SDS?

You should always know the hazards of a material before you start using it. For most people who work with a material, there are sections of the SDS that are more important than others. You should always read the name of the material, know the hazards, understand the safe handling and storage requirements, and understand what to do in an emergency.

Hazard Communication Standard

SDSs form the cornerstone of this standard. The Hazard Communication standard requires employers to; maintain an inventory of hazardous materials, provide employees training on the potential hazards associated with a material, obtain and maintain SDSs for each material onsite, establish proper methods and types of labels, and inform contractors of the hazards that their employees may be exposed to in their work area.

TOOLBOX TALKS
SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDS)

Meeting Conducted By: _____ Date: _____

Comments: _____

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Attendees:

Print	Signature	Print	Signature
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