proActive Safety Services

Weekly Safety Meeting

Train. Protect. Prevent.

Chemical Exposure

More than 30 million workers are potentially exposed to one or more chemical hazards. An estimated 650,000 existing hazardous chemical products, and hundreds of new ones are being introduced annually.

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) covers both physical hazards (such as flammability or the potential for explosions), and health hazards (including both acute and chronic effects). Under the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS), chemical manufacturers and importers must research the chemicals they produce and import. If a substance presents any of the physical and health hazards, as specified in the HCS, then the manufacturer or importer must communicate the hazards and cautions to their employees as well as to "downstream" employers who purchase the hazardous chemical. The goal behind the HCS is a safer workplace for workers, who informed of the hazards they encounter on the job, can create a safer work environment.

How Can We Become Exposed to Chemicals? What are the Routes of Entry? Chemicals - solids, liquids, or gases/vapors can affect humans by primary routes of entry such as: (1) Inhalation - the process by which irritants or toxins enter the body through the lungs as a result of the respiratory process. (2) Ingestion - the process of consuming contaminated food or water or otherwise permitting oral intake of irritants or toxins. (3) Direct contact with skin - the process by which hazardous materials cause injury to bodily tissues via direct contact or cause poisoning via absorption through the skin, or other external tissues. Also included in this category is the passage of toxic materials into the body via puncture wounds or other breaks in the skin. (4) Eyes - chemicals can enter through the eye and can injure the eye.

How Can I Protect Myself? The best way for workers to protect themselves is for them to know as much as possible about the chemicals they are likely to be exposed to and what hazards these chemicals may present. Because the science concerning chemical exposure on the human body is so limited, especially regarding the ways these chemicals in the workplace may interact, the worker should exercise caution and good judgment. People have varying degrees of sensitivity to chemical exposure and different chemicals. Workers who believe they are being adversely effected from chemical exposure should remove themselves from that environment, inform their employer, and seek medical attention, even consulting an Occupational Health Physician.

Where Can I Look For Help? The best source of information on a chemical is the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The MSDS can provide you with the information you need to protect yourself from chemical exposures.

Work Site Review: **Hazards/Safety Suggestions**

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Company Name: _____ Work Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Employee Signatures: **(continue on back of sheet if necessary)**

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced , or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness)

Manager/Supervisor's Signature: _____

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