

Chemical Hazard Communication Program

OVERVIEW

Each department and/or unit that uses chemicals is to develop, implement, and maintain a written Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

EXCEPTION: See [Laboratories](#) below. A written program describes how chemical hazards and protective measures are identified and communicated to employees, students, other WSU departments, and contractors (see Definitions).

The communication methods used are:

- Chemical container labeling and other forms of warning
- Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)
- Training and information

A Chemical Hazard Communication Program template is available to assist departments/units in developing their specific written program (see [Template](#)).

See also *SPPM* 4.14 and 5.12 for information concerning chemical carcinogens.

Laboratories

Laboratories are required to have a laboratory-specific written Chemical Hygiene Plan, if applicable (see *SPPM* 4.12). They are not required to have a written Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

The general University Chemical Hygiene Plan is published as the *Laboratory Safety Manual (LSM)*. To view the *LSM*, go to the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Laboratory Safety Manual website at:

ehs.wsu.edu/labsafety/LabSafetyManual.html

RESPONSIBILITIES

Department Chair/Director

The department chair or director is to ensure that this policy is implemented.

Chemical Hazard Communication Program

Supervisor

Supervisor responsibilities include:

- Implementing a written Chemical Hazard Communication Program specific to their department/unit.

To obtain a program template, see the EH&S Chemical Safety/
Hazard Communication website at:

ehs.wsu.edu/

Select **Workplace Safety**, then
Select **Chemical Safety/Hazard Communication**.

or contact EH&S; telephone 509-335-3041.

- Ensuring and documenting that workers and students within the unit receive the necessary training prior to working with any hazardous chemicals.
- Maintaining a list of hazardous chemicals used within the unit.
- Ensuring an SDS is available for each hazardous chemical on the list.
- Reviewing SDSs for information on chemical hazards, controlling hazards (i.e., personal protective equipment, ventilation), chemical storage, first aid and spills.
- Following the records retention schedule in *BPPM 90.01*. Departments must maintain SDSs for 30 years after the department ceases to use the chemical.
- Ensuring that chemical containers are labeled with the manufacturer's label or with a secondary label, as required in the department's/unit's written program. All chemical container labels are to include all of the following:
 - Chemical or product name (spelled out, no abbreviations)
 - Signal word (i.e., danger or warning)
 - Primary hazard (e.g., corrosive)

Employee/Student

Employees and students using hazardous chemicals are responsible for the following:

- Reading and understanding the department's/unit's written Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

Chemical Hazard Communication Program

Employee/Student (cont.)

- Following safe work practices.
- Reporting unsafe conditions and accidents.

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)

Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for:

- Providing chemical hazard communication assistance, workplace review, and training to University departments and units as needed.
- Assisting departments in locating and obtaining SDSs through the SDS request procedures (see [Safety Data Sheet](#)).
- Serving as custodian for SDS files obtained prior to December 8, 2005.

WRITTEN PROGRAM

Each nonlaboratory department and/or unit where any hazardous chemical is used *must* have a written Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

Identifying Hazardous Chemicals

There are several ways to determine if a chemical is hazardous:

- Look for signal words on the container label, such as WARNING or DANGER.
- Look for words on the container label indicating that the chemical is flammable, irritant, corrosive, carcinogen, etc.
- Review the product's SDS for hazard information (see [Safety Data Sheet](#)).
- Contact EH&S; telephone 509-335-3041.

Components

Minimum components of a written Chemical Hazard Communication Program include:

- List of hazardous chemicals known to be present in the workplace.
- Procedures for making sure all containers are properly labeled.
- Description of how to obtain and maintain SDSs.
- Description of how to train and inform employees about hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

Chemical Hazard Communication Program

Components (cont.)

- Description of how to inform employees about hazards encountered during non-routine tasks.

Template

Environmental Health and Safety has created a template designed for departments and/or units to develop and implement as their written Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

Obtain copies of the template from the EH&S Chemical Safety/Hazard Communication website or by contacting EH&S; telephone 509-335-3041. The website is at:

ehs.wsu.edu/

Select **Workplace Safety**, then
Select **Chemical Safety/Hazard Communication**.

Safety Data Sheet (SDS)

Hazardous chemical product manufacturers or distributors are to supply SDSs. Departments and units are to maintain and make available SDSs for each hazardous chemical product used. This instruction is to be described in the department/unit's written Chemical Hazard Communication Program.

A department or unit having difficulty obtaining an SDS from a manufacturer or supplier may complete a Safety Data Sheet Request form. Complete and/or print the PDF master to obtain copies of the request form.

Submit completed request forms to EH&S; mail code 1172.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to the University's Chemical Hazard Communication Program policy.

Hazardous Chemical

A hazardous chemical is defined as any chemical whose presence or use is a physical or health hazard.

Health Hazard

As used in the Chemical Hazard Communication Program, health hazard means any chemical for which there is significant evidence, based on at least one study conducted in accordance with established scientific principles, that acute or chronic health effects may occur in exposed employees.

Health hazards include carcinogens, toxic or highly toxic agents, reproductive toxins, irritants, corrosives, sensitizers, hepatotoxins, nephrotoxins, neurotoxins, agents which act on the hematopoietic system, and agents which damage the lungs, skin, eyes, or mucous membranes.

Chemical Hazard Communication Program

Laboratory

The term laboratory applies to a facility where the laboratory use of hazardous chemicals occurs. Such facilities are workplaces where relatively small quantities of hazardous chemicals are used on a laboratory scale, noncommercial production basis. Laboratory activities involve teaching, research, and sampling and analysis activities.

Physical Hazard

As used in the Chemical Hazard Communication Program, a physical hazard means a chemical for which there is scientifically valid evidence that it is a combustible liquid, compressed gas, explosive, flammable, or organic peroxide, oxidizer, pyrophoric, or reactive, e.g., emits flammable or toxic gas upon contact with the atmosphere or moisture/water.