

MSDS Reference

Material Safety Data Sheet



A Material Safety Data Sheet is a summary of information on a given chemical, identifying material, health, and physical hazards, exposure limits and precautions.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires an MSDS be prepared for chemicals that are hazardous according to the chemicals that are described in the HCS. MSDS are created by the manufacturer of a material and are often written for non-hazardous chemicals as well as hazardous chemicals.

An MSDS describes the hazards of a material and provides information on how the material can be safely handled, used and stored. The HCS regulation specifies the type of information that must be included but leaves the format of the document up to the discretion of the author. Consequently you will find MSDS organized in many different ways.

Many authors are now conforming to the American National Standard for Hazardous industrial chemicals. This format, when used, allows people to find information much more quickly and makes training easier.

The standard organizes the MSDS into the following sections:

1. Chemical Product and Company Identification
2. Composition, Information on Ingredients
3. Hazards Identification
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 Consideration
14. Transport Information
15. Regulatory Information
16. Other Information

MSDS, of course, do not contain all the information on a chemical. They are designed to give information about exposures resulting from customary and reasonably foreseeable occupational use, misuse, handling and storage. For complete information, make sure you always use labels, technical bulletins and other communications.