



HAZARD COMMUNICATION FACT SHEET

What is the Hazard Communication Standard?

The Hazard Communication (HAZCOM) Standard is a standard that is intended for use by employers and employees to inform them of their rights and responsibilities regarding hazardous chemicals used in the workplace.

What does the HAZCOM Standard require?

To ensure chemical safety in the workplace, information must be available about the identities and hazards of almost all chemicals used in the workplace. The HAZCOM Standard requires the development and dissemination of this information. It requires chemical manufacturers and importers to classify the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import. It also requires them to prepare labels and safety data sheets (SDSs) to convey this hazard information to their downstream customers.

Additionally, it requires all employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces to:

- Identify and list hazardous chemicals in their workplaces.
- Obtain SDSs and labels for each hazardous chemical, if not provided by the manufacturer, importer or distributor.
- Develop and implement a written hazard communication program, including labels, SDSs, employee training and the list of chemicals.
- Communicate hazard information to their employees through labels, SDSs and formal training programs.

What chemicals are considered hazardous?

HAZCOM covers chemicals defined by the standard as physical and health hazards, combustible dusts, simple asphyxiants, pyrophoric gases, and hazards not otherwise classified. It covers chemicals in all forms—liquids, solids, gases, vapors, fumes and mists—whether they are “contained” or not. The hazardous nature of the chemical and the potential for exposure are the factors that determine whether a chemical is covered. If it's not hazardous, it's not covered. If there is no potential for exposure, (e.g., the chemical is inextricably bound and cannot be released), the rule does not cover the chemical. Chemicals in containers, including pipes, are covered as well as chemicals generated in the work operations. For example, welding fumes, dusts and exhaust fumes are all sources of chemical exposure.

Are there any exemptions?

There are a variety of exemptions in the HAZCOM standard. Labeling exemptions apply when chemicals are labeled in accordance with the requirements of other acts, such as the Consumer Product Safety Act. Additionally, certain chemicals are completely exempt from the standard, such as food, drugs and cosmetics that employees bring into the work environment for their personal use and consumption.

Where can I find more information?

Please review our [Hazard Communication Subject Index](#).