



## Toolbox Talk: Hazard Communications

### **Introduction/Overview:**

You don't need to work in a manufacturing plant or in agriculture to be exposed to potentially hazardous chemicals; chemicals are everywhere. The Hazard Communication Program also referred to as "HAZCOM" or "The Employee Right to Know Act" was developed to ensure that employers provide employees with important safety information for chemicals used in their workplace. Hazard Communication is all about identifying chemical hazards in the workplace and communicating these hazards to ensure a safe and healthy work environment.

### **Statistics:**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 621 deaths due to exposure to harmful substances or environments in 2018. Chemical exposure cannot only cause immediate death but can also cause long-term issues such as organ damage, weakened immune systems, reproductive problems, and cancer. Hazard Communication has been the second most frequently cited violation by OSHA every year since 2014.

### **Talking Points:**

- **Written Program** – Contains the protocols and procedures for handling hazardous chemicals, as well as information around specific risks, the location and information on access to safety data sheets, emergency procedures, and any other necessary information to minimize the occurrence of a physical or health hazard to an employee.
- **Chemical inventory** – An up-to-date listing should be available on-site for all hazardous chemicals.
- **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)** - The manufacturer or importer of a hazardous chemical should provide relevant information, including the physical and chemical properties of the product.
- **Labels** - Must contain required elements including the product name, manufacturer, signal words, hazards, precautionary statements, and pictograms.
- **Employee training** - Any employee with the potential to be exposed to a hazardous chemical must be trained so that they are prepared with the knowledge to use, store, transport, and safely dispose of chemicals.

Developed by:

## Additional Discussion Notes:

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### Final Thoughts:

Always read and follow the manufacturer's warnings, proper use, and disposal. If used correctly, chemicals make our lives better. However, when misused, they can spell disaster.

**NOTE:** Always promote discussion with the attendees. If a question comes up that no one in attendance can answer, please contact OWC or the Loss Control Innovations consultants for assistance.

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### References:

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