



## Hazard Communication Policy

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### 1.0 Policy/Procedure

#### OSHA Hazard Communication Standard

The NC-OSHA Hazard Communication Standard requires employers to provide employees with information concerning the hazards associated with the chemicals in their workplace. This standard requires:

- A written hazard communication program
- Labels on containers
- An inventory of chemicals
- Posting area warning signs
- Availability of Material Safety Data Sheets
- Chemical safety training and information sessions when new chemicals are introduced into the workplace.

#### Responsibilities

Each County Department Director is responsible for compliance with the provisions of the Hazard Communication Program. Specific responsibilities include the periodic review of department operations that use or store hazardous chemicals to ensure that:

- Containers are properly labeled;
- Appropriate signs have been posted;
- Material Safety Data Sheets are available and kept updated;
- Chemical safety training has been provided; and
- An inventory of hazardous chemicals is maintained.

**The Risk Management Specialist will coordinate implementation of the Hazard Communication Program.**

## **Definition of Hazardous Chemicals**

As identified in the Hazard Communication Standard, chemicals with one or more of the following hazardous properties are subject to the Standard:

Physical Hazards; combustible, flammable, explosive, reactive, pressurized (compressed gases);

Health Hazards: toxic, carcinogenic, corrosive, irritant, or sensitizer.

A chemical is considered to be carcinogenic if it has been evaluated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and found to be a carcinogen or potential carcinogen, or if it is listed as a carcinogen or potential carcinogen in the Annual Report on Carcinogens published by the National Toxicology Program (NTP), or if it is regulated by OSHA as a carcinogen.

## **Labels and Other Forms of Warning**

Chemical manufacturers, importers, or distributors are required to ensure that each container for hazardous chemicals is labeled with the identity of the hazardous chemical(s), appropriate hazardous warnings, and the name and address of the chemical manufacturer, importer or other responsible party. Each County Department Director or designate is to ensure that chemicals they receive are labeled with the identity of the hazardous chemical(s) and appropriate hazard warnings.

Warning signs are to be displayed in areas where there may be airborne hazardous chemicals. This would include areas such as welding; operation of internal combustion engines, indoor application of paint, or adhesives; grinding and sanding operations; and removal of asbestos containing materials. The person responsible for producing the above potentially hazardous environments is responsible for posting the area warning signs.

## **Chemical Inventory**

A current inventory of all hazardous chemicals present in the workplace is to be maintained. The inventory should be kept with the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) file.

## **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)**

Chemical manufacturers are required to send a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) with the initial shipment of a chemical. The MSDS contains detailed information about physical and chemical properties of the chemical including the physical and health hazards, safe handling precautions, spill clean-up procedures, emergency and first aid procedures.

Each County Department is to maintain all MSDS's received and make them readily available to their employees in a file, notebook or by FAX upon request. If an MSDS for a chemical is not received, the chemical manufacturer or distributor should be contacted to obtain the

MSDS. Efforts to obtain the MSDS are to be documented by either a telephone log or with copies of correspondence.

Always request an MSDS when placing an order.

### **Information and Training**

All employees who work in areas where there are hazardous chemicals are to receive chemical safety training. This training is to be documented and provided at the time of initial employment and before a new hazard is introduced in the workplace.

Hazardous chemical safety training is to include the following essential information:

- Interpreting information on labels and MSDS's
- Location of hazardous materials in the workplace
- Location and availability of material safety data sheets
- Acute and chronic effects of chemicals
- Safe handling procedures
- Personal protective equipment
- Methods used to detect leaks and releases
- Emergency procedures and how to obtain First Aid
- Spill clean-up and waste disposal

In addition to this training each department is to provide training for the specific chemicals used or stored in the work area and whenever a new hazard is introduced. A record of training is to be maintained in the employee safety training permanent file. The record is to include: employee name, outline of the training, date and time of training, certification of completion and name of the person providing the training.

### **Contractors**

The Risk Management Specialist is to be notified when contractors are to work in areas covered by the Hazardous Communication Program. The Risk Management Specialist or designee will inform the contractor of potential contact with hazardous chemicals at their work location and the name of the Department Director from whom chemical safety information is available.

Contractors who use hazardous chemicals at County facilities are to provide a list of the chemicals to be brought on the property and to maintain a copy of the MSDS's at the work-site.

## HEALTH HAZARDS

### Contaminants

Health hazards include air contaminants such as:

- Dusts – Asbestos, lead, silica, wood dusts
- Mists – Acid, Oil, Paint, Poisons
- Gases – Carbon monoxide, waste anesthetic gases, etc.
- Vapors – Degreasing vapors, trichloroethylene, etc.
- Fumes – Metal fumes from welding, cutting and soldering.

Employees may be exposed to the toxic effects of these health hazards through ingestion, skin absorption or through breathing contaminants into the respiratory system.

Excessive exposure may result in an immediate acute effect or the toxic effect could occur only after years of continuous exposure.

All potential and suspected health hazards will be evaluated by trained personnel to determine if a health hazard exists. If a hazard is found to exist, precautions are to be taken to protect employees.

Employees are to become familiar with the County's Hazard Communication Program concerning training, labeling and safety precautions for using and handling hazardous materials. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's) that are available to employees describe the hazards in detail, their effects, safety and health precautions and emergency procedures.

If you are concerned that a potential health hazard may exist, contact your supervisor or Department Director so that an evaluation can be made and appropriate action can be taken to protect all employees.

**BE AWARE OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN YOUR WORKPLACE. READ THE LABELS.** Never mix cleaning compounds or other chemicals.

Learn what effects could occur in the event of excessive exposure.

Take the proper precautions to protect yourself, the public and your fellow employees from exposure. Do not work with hazardous materials until you have been trained.

### Biological Hazards

Biohazards are biological agents or substances present in or arising from the work environment which present or may present a hazard to the health or well being of the worker or the community.

Biological agents and substances include, but are not limited to infectious and parasitic agents, noninfectious microorganisms such as some fungi, yeast, plant and plant products, and animal and animal products, which cause occupational diseases.

Generally, biohazards are either:

- Infectious microorganisms
- Toxic biological substances
- Biological allergens or
- Any combination of these.

Biological agents can be found in numerous settings, but are primarily found in clinical, diagnostic research and laboratory activities where viable microorganisms or clinical materials containing infectious agents are handled.

If it is determined that biohazards may be encountered, the Risk Management Specialist or the Department Director will arrange for these employees to be trained on which control measures and work practices are to be used in order to have a safe work place.