



HAZARD COMMUNICATION:

UNDERSTANDING CHEMICAL LABELS



Talking Points:

One of the most important parts of the HazCom program is understanding chemical labels. Labels provide critical information about a product's hazards, safe handling procedures, required personal protective equipment (PPE), and emergency response measures.

Never use a chemical unless you understand its label and know the appropriate precautions.

Every Chemical Container Must Be Labeled

Read the label before you use the chemical. Labels provide the information needed to recognize hazards, select proper PPE, handle chemicals safely, and respond effectively in an emergency. Knowing this information can help prevent injuries and keep everyone safe.

Remember:

- Never use chemicals from an unlabeled container.
- Do not remove or deface labels.
- Report damaged or missing labels immediately.
- Ensure secondary containers are labeled according to company procedures.

Know the Six Required Label Elements

1. Product Identifier

- The chemical name or identification number.
- Links the label to the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

2. Signal Word

Indicates the severity of the hazard:

- Danger = More severe hazards
- Warning = Less severe hazards

3. Hazard Statements

Describe the nature of the hazard. Examples:

- Causes skin irritation.
- Highly flammable liquid and vapor.
- May cause respiratory irritation.

4. Pictograms

Standardized symbols that quickly communicate hazards.

Common pictograms include:

- Flame
- Health Hazard
- Explosive
- Exclamation Mark
- Corrosion
- Oxidizing
- Skull and Crossbones
- Gas Cylinder
- Environment (may appear on some labels)

5. Precautionary Statements

Provide instructions on:

- Prevention • Response • Storage • Disposal

6. Manufacturer Information

Includes the manufacturer's name, address, and phone number.

Use Required PPE

Identify what protective equipment may be needed, such as:

- Safety glasses • Chemical-resistant gloves • Respirators
- Face shields • Protective clothing

Always wear the PPE required for the task.

Ask Questions if You're Unsure

If you do not understand:

- A label
- A pictogram,
- A hazard statement
- Safe handling procedures

Discussion Questions

1. Where are Safety Data Sheets located in our facility?
2. What should you do if you find an unlabeled chemical container?
3. What is the difference between the signal words "Danger" and "Warning"?
4. What PPE is required for the chemicals you commonly use?
5. What should you do if a chemical is transferred to a secondary container?

For more safety tips and courses, visit ndsc.org

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