

Pinnacol Pointers for Safety Group Programs

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Six Steps to Effective, Compliant Hazard Communication

Inadequate, noncompliant hazard communication can lead to worker injuries, even death. OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) ensures employees' right to know and understand the potential hazards of chemicals they work with, as well as safeguards to protect themselves.

OSHA sets forth the following six steps to effective hazard communication:

1. **Identify a point person for hazard communication** — This employee is responsible for obtaining safety data sheets (SDSs), planning employee training and managing other elements of program implementation at your organization.
2. **Develop and implement the plan** — Hazard communication requires a plan that explains how your organization will conduct its program. The plan should list hazardous chemicals at your worksites and specify labeling, SDSs, training and communication protocols.
3. **Label all containers** — Ensure all containers in your facility are labeled. If your organization manufactures or ships chemicals, label them. Labels must include specific information set forth in the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals section below.
4. **Make SDSs available** — Obtain an SDS for each hazardous chemical at your workplace, and make SDSs readily available to workers. If you make SDSs available only electronically, make sure there's a way to provide the SDSs in the event of a power failure or emergency. If you receive chemical deliveries, suppliers should provide accompanying SDSs; if they don't, request the SDSs.
5. **Formally educate employees** — Train employees before they begin work near hazardous chemicals and when new hazards are introduced to the workplace. Conduct multilingual training to accommodate a diverse workforce, and ensure that employees understand the hazards and your organization's protective measures and equipment.
6. **Evaluate and enhance hazard communication** — Periodically evaluate, update and enhance your organization's program, especially when new hazards are introduced. OSHA's HCS mandates that hazard communication remains up-to-date, comprehensive and tailored to your organization.

Classification and Labeling of Chemicals

OSHA's HCS provides classification criteria for the hazards of chemicals, as well as a standardized approach to creating SDSs and labels. Your SDSs must follow a specified 16-section format, and labels must include the following six elements:

- A product name or identifier, such as “WD-40”
- A signal word, such as “danger” or “warning”
- Pictogram(s)
- Hazard statement(s)
- Precautionary statement(s)
- The name, address and telephone number of the chemical manufacturer, importer or other responsible party

Resources

For more information, visit [OSHA's hazard communication webpage](#). Another helpful resource is the [Society of Chemical Hazard Communication](#). Also, check out [Pinnacol's hazard communication webpages](#) for further information and downloads of a sample written hazard communication program, training materials and more. Pinnacol offers J.J. Keller safety resources on this topic, including training videos, interactive training and safety talks. Or contact Pinnacol's Safety On Call at safetyoncall@pinnacol.com or 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752. Our Safety Services Team stands ready to answer questions, provide materials, and help your organization remain compliant and keep your employees safe, healthy and productive.

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