

Editor's Note: Safety Group Program Monthly Newsletter Article — June 2020

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Why Your Hazard Communication Program Needs Attention During the COVID-19 Pandemic

For many Colorado businesses, now is the right time to update their hazard communication program to ensure compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration [Hazard Communication Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1200](#). The standard requires employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces to label all containers, obtain safety data sheets (SDSs) and train exposed workers to handle the chemicals appropriately.

The COVID-19 outbreak has prompted lots of businesses to purchase new, stronger chemicals to disinfect high-touch work surfaces, equipment and tools to prevent the spread of the virus. Businesses using these new products more frequently and for longer durations need to ensure they comply with the OSHA standard. Companies could use the refresher. In fiscal year 2018, [hazard communication](#) ranked as OSHA's [second most frequently cited standard](#). Keep your employees safe by reviewing these tips and tools.

Tips for hazard communication

- Add any new cleaning chemicals used for coronavirus disinfection to your chemical inventory list.
- Inform and train employees on the hazardous chemicals in their work area before their initial assignment and when new hazards are introduced.
- Train employees on the hazards of the new chemicals, appropriate protective measures, and where and how to obtain additional information.

- Ensure that all containers of hazardous chemicals in the workplace are labeled.
- Instruct your receiving department to review labels on incoming products to ensure all incoming containers of hazardous chemicals have labels that include the following information:
 - Product identifier.
 - Signal word.
 - Pictograms.
 - Hazard statements.
 - Precautionary statements.
 - Name, address and phone number of the responsible party.
- Review the format of [SDSs](#).
- Get the SDS for each new chemical, and make all of them readily accessible to employees.

Resources for hazard communication

Want to know more about implementing or updating your hazard communication program? Try these tools:

- Consult Pinnacol's [hazard communication guide](#), including our sample hazard communication program.
- Learn more about the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals.
- Listen to the Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates' April 3 webinar, which addressed hazard communication and COVID-19 cleaning.
- Review OSHA's guidelines on preparing workplaces for coronavirus, including hazard communication rules.

[Contact a Pinnacol safety consultant](#) to discuss specific questions about your hazard communication program.