

Labels & Hazardous Chemical Containers

The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (29CFR1910.1200) ensures that workers who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals know about the chemicals' hazards and understand how to protect themselves from exposure. The Hazard Communication Standard requires that all containers of hazardous chemicals be properly labeled. If a container is incorrectly labeled or has no label, a worker may not know its contents or whether the substance is being used and stored safely.

Labels

Labels are required for all primary and secondary containers of hazardous materials. Primary containers are the original containers received from the manufacturer. Secondary containers are cans, squeeze bottles, spray bottles, and other vessels to which an employee transfers hazardous materials.

Primary / Original Containers

When receiving hazardous chemicals, ensure that the containers are correctly labeled with the chemical's identity and hazard warning and that MSDS sheets are provided. Labels on primary containers must:

- Show the name of the material. This must be the same name as listed on the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS);
- Provide hazard warning information appropriate for employee protection;
- List the name and address of the manufacturer, and;
- Be legible and prominently displayed.

Most labels will provide additional safety information to help you protect yourself while working with this substance. Labels on new containers of hazardous chemicals should never be removed or defaced, except when empty.

Secondary Containers

When you transfer a hazardous chemical from a primary container to a secondary container, label the secondary container if it will ever be out of your immediate and direct control, or if there is a chance that someone else will handle the container before you finish it. Secondary containers must be marked or labeled with the name of the material and hazard warnings. This is to be done by the employee transferring the material, and is part of their responsibility to help protect co-workers.

Remember

- All secondary containers that will be stored, used by others, or not used immediately must be labeled properly.
- In addition to container labeling the employee must have access to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each product. The MSDS contains information not found on the label.
- Always review the label and MSDS before using any hazardous chemical product. Use all recommended personal protective equipment (PPE).
- If you find a container with no label, report it to your supervisor. You should also report labels that are torn or illegible so that they can be replaced immediately.