



Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

- As part of the employee right-to-know law your employer is required to provide MSDSs for every hazardous chemical substance used at the company.
- MSDSs will vary by manufacturer, but they will all have at least eight sections.
- ① The product will be identified by its scientific name and its common name, if it has one.
 - Emergency phone numbers will be listed in this section, along with the name and address of the manufacturer.
 - ② The hazardous ingredients will be identified, along with information on how long you can be exposed to these ingredients.
 - ③ The characteristics of the material are listed.
 - Chemical characteristics are items such as boiling point and flash point.
 - Physical characteristics include appearance, color, and odor.
 - ④ Fire and explosion data information is provided on how to extinguish fires caused by the material.
 - ⑤ Another section provides information identifying chemicals that can be used and stored together, and substances that must be kept apart. This section is called “reactivity data”.
 - ⑥ Information about health hazards is in its own section.
 - This section will explain the signs and symptoms of overexposure so you will know how to tell when too much of a substance is in your system.
 - You will also be given first aid information. Always look here before suggesting any kind of first aid, because what may be the best treatment for one substance may be harmful with another.
 - ⑦ One section will provide steps to follow in the event of a spill or leak and will include ways to store and dispose of materials.
 - ⑧ Finally, information is given concerning control methods, such as the types of personal protective equipment or ventilation systems to use.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Training Tips

- Distribute copies of one MSDS and point out the sections.
- Ask a number of questions about the substance so that employees learn to read the sheets.
 - What is the appearance of this substance?
 - What emergency phone numbers are listed?
- Show them MSDSs from a few different manufacturers so they realize that the sheets are not always printed in the same formats.