



Chemical Safety (Hazard Communication)

This is a review of the basic elements of the **Oregon OSHA Hazard Communication Standard**. This law applies to the use of hazardous and toxic substances at work, and focuses on communicating hazards via MSDSs and labeling.

MSDS stands for **Material Safety Data Sheet**. This is the best source of information about a hazardous substance that is in your work area. If you work with or around hazardous materials, the law requires you to have access to MSDSs. The exceptions are for **consumer-use products used for their intended purpose** (e.g.: hairspray for holding hair, or glass cleaner for cleaning glass), **in normal, consumer-use quantities**. However, if you are using a product **outside** of its intended use or quantity (e.g.: the same hairspray is used to fix cytology samples, or glass cleaner is used to clean floors), you must maintain an MSDS.

OHSU policy requires departments to maintain paper copies of MSDSs in work areas. Binders containing these should have an index page that lists the MSDSs inside. If you find that the binder in your area does not contain an MSDS for a chemical you work with, or if you need an updated one, contact Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (Marquam Hill: 503 494-7795; West Campus: 503 748-1501).

Container labels also carry important information. There are two basic kinds of containers:

- The **primary container** comes from the manufacturer. The labels on primary containers include information required of manufacturers. These must remain intact and readable.
- A **secondary container** is one that we create when we transfer the contents of a primary container to any other container for our use. A label or understandable means of identifying container contents is required on all secondary containers.

Secondary container labels are allowed to show less information than primary labels but need to include:

1. **Product Identity** - name of what is inside; and
2. **Health Hazards** - basic risk information and target organs, as appropriate.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - If you have to work with hazardous chemicals, you must protect yourself from exposures. PPE includes gloves, eye protection, face shields, gowns, and other items. These are provided free to you, if your job requires you to work with hazardous chemicals.

This information is a summary of the OHSU [Hazard Communication Program](#). Exceptions for research laboratories are outlined in the [Laboratory Safety Manual](#).

This information is a service of the OHSU Safety Committee (503 494-7795).
(7/2006)

