

## PSU's Hazard Communication Program

The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OR-OSHA) standard called Hazard Communication (Right-to-Know) requires employers to inform their employees about hazardous chemicals in the workplace. Chemical labels, safety data sheets (SDSs) and training provide required hazard information.

Labels on manufacturer's containers of chemicals provide the chemical name, hazard information, and the manufacturer's name and address. When hazardous chemicals are transferred to other containers (like spray bottles), the containers must be labeled with chemical name and appropriate hazard warnings.

Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) are provided by manufacturers to convey information to employees about the hazards of chemicals. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) maintains an accessible database of SDSs on our website.

Employee training on hazard information and protection against chemical hazards is available from a variety of sources. If this brochure does not answer your questions, or if you use chemicals beyond office products, ask your supervisor about training or call EHS (5-3738).

## Hazard Communication in Offices

Some office products contain small amounts of hazardous chemicals. Since most of these products are used intermittently and in small quantities, adverse health effects are not expected under normal conditions of use. Normal use is using the product as the manufacturer intended and with the same frequency and duration as a consumer would use the product at home.

Under many circumstances, offices may be located in buildings with academic laboratories, art studios and maintenance shops or where contract work occasionally occurs. Chemicals may be used or stored in these areas. If concerns arise, contact EHS (5-3738).

Glues, rubber cement, correction fluids, broad-tip pens, and cleaning products may contain solvents that can pose both a health and fire hazard under certain conditions. These chemicals could cause drying and/or irritation to the eyes and skin on direct contact. Vapors from the chemicals can cause irritation to mucous membranes of the eyelids, sinuses, and respiratory system and central nervous system.

Carbonless copy paper may still be used on campus. Older types may release small amounts of formaldehyde. While the exposure to formaldehyde is below the regulatory exposure limits, a few individuals may experience one or more symptoms including headaches, and skin, eye, or respiratory irritation.

Stamp pad liquid can be harmful if swallowed or produce eye irritation on contact.

***First Aid Information*** can be found by reading the SDS. In general:

- For skin contact, wash with soap and water; for eye exposure flush with water for 15 minutes.
- For overexposure by inhalation, remove victim to fresh air.
- Oregon Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222 or 911 for immediate medical assistance.

**If you work in a lab,  
OR-OSHA's Laboratory Standard  
applies to your work.**

**Read your lab's  
Chemical Hygiene Plan  
to learn the hazards and safety  
programs present in your  
workspace.**

**To reduce risk of exposure to chemicals in office products:**

- Follow the container label directions
- Use products in areas with adequate ventilation
- Avoid breathing vapors
- Prevent contact with skin and eyes
- Keep containers closed to reduce vapor escape and spills
- Review the product SDS

**Hazard Communication for Other Campus Hazards**

**Biological Hazards** that may be encountered on campus include:

- Contaminated needles or syringes
- Deceased animals
- Blood and body fluids
- Other contaminated materials

If you encounter these materials, avoid contact and report location to Facilities and Property Management at 5-2FIX.

**Air Quality Concerns** - Occasionally, unusual odors may circulate within buildings from a source either from outside of the building or from an operation within the building.

If concerns arise regarding air quality, contact Facilities and Property Management at 5-2FIX.

**Asbestos** - Many buildings at Portland State University were built with materials containing asbestos such as spray-on fireproofing, wallboard, roofing, floor tile, joint compounds, acoustical/ decorative plaster, spackling, fire doors, acoustic ceiling tiles and pipe insulation.

These materials do not pose a health hazard unless they are damaged or deteriorate to a point where the small asbestos fibers may be released into the air. The University has a comprehensive asbestos safety program to safely remove asbestos material during construction projects and immediately repair any damaged material.

Contact EHS (5-3738) for additional information regarding asbestos.

**Do you use chemicals beyond routine office products as part of your job?**

**Ask your supervisor about comprehensive Hazard Communication training or call EHS for more information.**



**Hazard Communication for Office Environments**

**Environmental Health and Safety**

503-725-3738  
<http://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/>