CrewSigned

Hazard Communication Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

We work with chemicals every day, even if we do not think of them that way. Concrete, cleaners, paints, solvents, adhesives, fuels, sealers and spray foam can all burn skin, damage eyes or lungs, catch fire or make you sick over time. You have a right to know what you are working with, and today we are going over how to find out.

Start with the label. Every container from the manufacturer has a label with the same basic parts. The product name. A signal word: Danger for the more severe hazards, Warning for the less severe. Hazard statements that say what the product can do, like causes severe skin burns or may cause cancer. Precautionary statements that tell you how to protect yourself and what to do if you are exposed. And the supplier's name and phone number.

Look for the pictograms. These are red diamonds with black symbols, and you can recognize them in a second. A flame means it can catch fire. A skull and crossbones means it can kill in small amounts. A corrosion symbol means it can burn skin and eyes or eat through metal. An exclamation mark means it can irritate or cause less serious health effects. A person with a starburst on their chest means it can cause long-term health effects like cancer or lung damage. Learn what they mean.

The safety data sheet, or SDS, has the full story. Every hazardous product we use has one, and they are kept where you can get to them during your shift. The SDS tells you the hazards, what PPE to wear, how to store the product, what to do in a spill or fire, and first aid. If you are not sure how to handle something, read the SDS before you start, not after something goes wrong.

Label your own containers. If you pour a product into a bucket, spray bottle or other container, that container needs a label with the product name and its hazards, unless you are the only person using it and you use it all right away. Never put chemicals in drink bottles.

Follow what the label and SDS tell you about gloves, eye protection, ventilation and respirators. And never mix chemicals unless the instructions say to. Some combinations, like bleach and ammonia, make toxic gas.

Discussion questions

1. Pick one product we use every day. What does its label say the main hazard is?
2. Where are the safety data sheets for this job, and how would you find one fast?
3. If you pour a chemical into a spray bottle or bucket, what has to go on that container?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1910.1200, Hazard Communication
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1200

SOURCES

Hazard Communication Standard Labels QuickCard (OSHA 3492): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3492QUICKCARDLABEL.pdf
Hazard Communication Standard Pictogram QuickCard (OSHA 3491): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3491QUICKCARDPICTOGRAM.pdf
Hazard Communication Safety Data Sheets QuickCard (OSHA 3493): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3493QUICKCARDSAFETYDATASHEET.pdf
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Hazard Communication: https://www.osha.gov/hazcom

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Hazard Communication Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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