



South Carolina  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

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## **HAZARD COMMUNICATION POLICY**

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### **I. POLICY**

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) includes some operations that use chemical substances which can be harmful unless precautions are taken. This written Hazard Communication Policy is intended to serve as a guideline for all units in developing an adequate means of informing and protecting employees and complying with regulatory requirements. Its goal is to ensure the protection of all employees involved in the handling and use of hazardous chemicals. All SCDA employees exposed to hazardous chemicals shall be trained as outlined in this Hazard Communication Policy. It shall be the policy of this Agency to maintain awareness of all hazardous chemicals encountered by its employees and to communicate any associated hazards along with the necessary safety precautions.

Also, all visitors to SCDA facilities and job sites shall comply with this program or shall be denied access to these areas.

### **II. HISTORY**

On November 25, 1983, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued the Hazard Communication Standard, (29 CFR 1910.1200), commonly known as the Employee Right-to-Know Law. This Department of Labor standard originally was aimed towards protecting manufacturing workers from injuries and illnesses due to chemical exposures. It established specific requirements for manufacturing employers to provide information and training to affected employees about the chemicals they may encounter in the workplace.

Effective May 23, 1988, the Hazard Communication Standard now applies to an expanded scope of employers, including governmental entities.

### **III. REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Ensure that each container of hazardous chemicals in the workplace is labeled, tagged, or marked with the identity of the chemical and appropriate hazard warning.
- B. Maintain copies of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for each hazardous chemical in the workplace and ensure that the SDS are readily accessible to employees.
- C. Provide employees with specific information regarding hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area. Employees must be informed of:
  1. The requirements of the Hazard Communication Standard.
  2. Any operations in their work area where hazardous chemicals are present.
  3. The location and availability of the written hazard communication policy and the SDS.
- D. Provide employees with training regarding hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area. The training must include at least:
  1. Methods and observations that may be used to detect the presence of a chemical in the work area.
  2. The physical and health hazards of the chemicals in the work area.
  3. The measures employees can take to protect themselves from those hazards.

4. The details of the employer's hazard communication policy, including an explanation of the SDS, the labeling system, and the methods for employees to obtain and use the appropriate hazard information.
- E. Develop, implement, and maintain at the workplace a written hazard communication program, which must include at least the following items:
1. A description of how the requirements in Sections A, B, C, and D above will be met.
  2. A list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present.
  3. A description of the methods that will be used to inform employees of the hazards of non-routine tasks.

## IV. EXEMPT CHEMICALS

- A. Any food, food additive, color additive, drug, or cosmetic, including materials intended for use as ingredients in such products (e.g., flavors and fragrances), as such terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) and regulation issued under that Act, when they are subject to the labeling requirements of that Act and labeling regulations issued under that Act by the Food and Drug Administration;
- B. Any distilled spirits (beverage alcohols), wine, or malt beverage intended for non-industrial use, as such terms are defined in the Federal Alcohol Administration Act (27 U.S.C. 2051 et seq.) and Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261 et seq.) respectively, when subject to a consumer product safety standard or labeling requirement of those Acts, or regulations issued under those Acts by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- C. Any hazardous waste as such term is defined by the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), when subject to regulations issued under that Act by the Environmental Protection Agency;
- D. Tobacco or tobacco products;
- E. Wood or wood products;
- F. Articles which do not release, or otherwise result in exposure to, a hazardous chemical under normal conditions of use; and

- G. Foods, drugs, or cosmetics intended for personal consumption or use by employees while in the workplace.

## V. SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDS)

### A. Obtaining SDS

A Safety Data Sheet is required for each hazardous chemical on the workplace list. Chemical manufacturers and suppliers are required to provide a SDS for each chemical provided to a customer. SDS should be provided by the manufacturer or distributor of any hazardous chemical purchased. If not provided with the product at the point of purchase, units shall document their efforts to obtain a SDS from suppliers. A copy of a letter requesting each SDS should be maintained in the SDS file until each SDS is supplied.

### B. Maintaining SDS

Safety Data Sheets, a copy of the written Hazard Communication Policy, and a list of hazardous chemicals in the workplace are to be maintained in a file, folder, or notebook at each permanent workplace at a location convenient and readily accessible to all employees during all shifts.

Certain mobile operations, such as pesticide collection crews or other special crews, which have an increased exposure to hazardous chemicals, should keep copies of SDS available with them at job/collection sites.

### C. Updating SDS

Incoming Safety Data Sheets shall be reviewed by supervisors, or their designee, and copies of updated SDS shall be forwarded to affected units. If the SDS has not been revised, the new SDS may be discarded. If the SDS has been revised, the new SDS must be placed in the file and the old SDS removed. The date of removal shall be written on the old SDS and it shall be placed in a file labeled Old Safety Data Sheets. The old Safety Data Sheets must be maintained thirty (30) years past the duration of the exposed employees' employment.

## VI. CONTAINER LABELING

### A. Incoming Containers

Under the standard, chemical manufacturers and suppliers are responsible for labeling containers of hazardous chemicals. It is the responsibility of the supervisor, or

the designee, in each unit to ensure that each container arriving at a facility is labeled or marked legibly with the following information:

1. Identity (can be any chemical or common name for the agent as long as the term used is the same as shown in the section's list of hazardous chemicals and the Safety Data Sheets).
2. Appropriate hazard warnings.
3. Name and address of the chemical manufacturer, supplier, or other responsible party. (Recommendation only).

## B. Workplace Containers

Hazardous chemicals which are dispensed from the original shipping container must be dispensed into appropriate containers with chemical identity and the hazard warning affixed. Any further dispensing likewise must be into similarly labeled containers ultimately to the point of final use.

### *Exceptions:*

Chemicals to be used exclusively by one employee during one work shift may be transferred to and used from unlabeled containers. However, if the employee leaves the chemical unattended at any time (for example: to take a break, answer a telephone call, or go to lunch) then the chemical container must be labeled.

## C. Updating of Labels

If a section is notified of significant hazard characteristic changes on an updated SDS, the supervisor, or the designee, responsible for container labeling shall see that any outdated hazard warnings on labels are corrected to convey the updated information.

## VII. NON-ROUTINE TASKS

- A. Circumstances may require employees to perform tasks that involve potential exposure to hazardous chemicals which are not in the course of the regular job. Prior to these tasks, employees must be notified regarding:

1. The nature of any hazardous chemicals present. SDS for those chemicals should be reviewed in detail and all recommendations followed in preparing for the task.
  2. Precautionary measures and protective equipment needed for the task.
  3. Any hazards associated with chemicals present in unlabeled pipes, such as refrigeration ammonia and propane in distribution systems.
- B. When in doubt, contact the immediate supervisor before proceeding with an unfamiliar task which may endanger an employee.

## VIII. NON-AGENCY PERSONNEL (Contractors, etc.)

- A. Mutual conveyance of chemical hazard information is necessary between the sections and outside contractors and service personnel.
- B. The agency employees must be informed of all hazardous substances to be brought into the workplace by contractors and/or service personnel.
- C. Contractors and/or service personnel must be informed of all hazardous substances they may encounter during their activities in the workplace.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Laboratory to inform its employees and provide any necessary training to deal with chemical hazards brought into the workplace. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the Laboratory to provide contractors and/or service personnel adequate information on chemical hazards within the workplace, so that contractors may inform and provide their employees with any training necessary.

In dealing with contractors, the following information shall be exchanged:

1. A list of hazardous chemicals to which they may be exposed while on the job site.
2. Precautions that employees may take to lessen the possibility of exposure.
3. The location of SDS, which must be immediately available.

## IX. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

- A. All SCDA Laboratory, Consumer Services, and Farmers Market employees are required to receive initial Hazard Communication training. Employees who are or may be exposed to hazardous chemicals in the workplace shall receive additional training on each chemical hazard (not necessarily each chemical). New employees shall be trained as soon as possible after hiring and before they are assigned to work with hazardous chemicals.
- B. Initial Hazard Communication training will be coordinated by the Assistant Director for Technical Services. The initial training shall consist of a discussion of all sections of this Hazard Communication Policy.
- C. Additional training shall be conducted by supervisors on chemical hazards in each workplace and when a new hazard, not necessarily a new chemical, is introduced into the work area.
- D. Documented records of training shall be maintained at each work area and shall include:
  - 1. A copy of the Hazard Communication Policy.
  - 2. A description of any audio-visuals used.
  - 3. The date training was completed.
  - 4. All employees completing the Hazard Communication Training shall sign a Training Roster Form.
- E. Follow-up shall be conducted by supervisors to ensure that affected employees remain aware of the Hazard Communication Standard and its requirements, that they can show where the SDS are located, and that they are generally familiar with the hazardous properties of the chemicals in their work area and the protective measures being implemented.