Safety Data Sheets Checklist

Chemicals wash dishes, strip or buff floors, disinfect furniture and sterilize instruments.

It is hard to imagine our modern society without the use and benefit of chemical cleaners. But there is considerable risk. Caution and knowledge in the use of chemical cleaners is mandatory.

The following are just a few examples where one can find chemical use.

Cleaning carts:
Are a source of coughing, wheezing, headaches or dizziness for healthcare workers. Breathing respiratory irritants in **Cleaning, Sterilizing and Disinfecting Products** make you sensitive to them. Cleaning products can burn skin and eyes which is found in solvents, detergents, acids and alkalis and also known to cause allergic reactions, poisoning and death.

Prevention
How do we protect and prevent harmful and deadly consequences in the use of chemicals in our workplace?

Answer: Safety Datasheets in the Globally Harmonized System.

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) was created by the United Nations to help bring uniformity to hazardous materials labeling around the world.

The HazCom “SDSs” (Safety Data Sheets) are being replaced by GHS-compliant “SDSs” (Safety Data Sheets). The general information required on the safety data sheet (SDS) will remain essentially the same as that in the current standard SDS.

When SDSs Are Used
An SDS must be used for substances and mixtures that meet the criteria for physical, health, or environmental hazards under the GHS. Safety Data Sheets are required for all mixtures which contain toxic or carcinogenic ingredients in concentrations exceeding the cut-off limits.

Sometimes SDSs are required for mixtures which do not meet the criteria, but do contain hazardous ingredients in certain concentrations. An SDS is usually created by the company that manufactures or imports and distributes the product. The SDS created by the company is then passed along to downstream employers who use it in their workplace.

SDS Content
The SDS should provide a clear and easily understandable description of the data used to identify hazards.

At a minimum, the SDSs cover 16 different data sections. These sections include: Identification of the substance and the supplier, the hazard identification with the appropriate GHS pictogram, cautionary phrase and other information, a composition of ingredients, first aid and firefighting measures, handling and storage, and physical and chemical properties, such as odor, pH and appearance.

Workers need to know what **Structural Differences** exist between the old Material Safety Data Sheets and the new GHS compliant Safety Data Sheets.

Failure to understand the differences puts the workplace in peril.

In the past, HazCom classification was mostly a “yes” or “no” activity. A chemical was a carcinogen or it was not a carcinogen. Under GHS, classification of chemicals includes the dividing of hazards into sub-categories. So, using the carcinogen example, a chemical classified as a carcinogen will be further categorized as a category 1A, category 1B, or category 2 carcinogen. (1A is for “known carcinogens,” 1B is for “probable carcinogens,” and 2 is for “suspected carcinogens.”)

Additionally, GHS classification brings substantive differences to some hazard classes, such as combustible liquids, which are now called flammable liquids.

OSHA created three new OSHA-defined hazards that must be addressed on labels and SDSs: pyrophoric gas, simple asphyxiants and combustible dust.