



Workplace Safety

Video: Hazard Communications: It's Time to Raise Your Standards

| May 16, 2019

Video Highlights

Knowing whether toxic and dangerous chemicals are present in the workplace has not always been a universally understood experience, especially country to country, but laws have been enacted and have evolved to help.

Today, there are global standards for communicating information about hazardous materials and how to store, handle and dispose of them. This unification of standards means dangers can be easily recognized and understood all over the world.

Signs, labels and data sheets about the safety of the materials being handled are paramount—as is annual training required by OSHA in the U.S.

The original U.S. law on hazard communication went into effect in late 1983—but that did not mean that the information chemical manufacturers provided across the world was the same or clearly understood by workers handling dangerous substances.

For companies and manufacturing workers alike, confusion reigned. Country-to-country standards were different—and what manufacturers were required to specifically inform workers of in writing and in visual form was not uniform and did not fully detail all the hazards present.

In 2012, a more consistent and fully detailed standard was put into effect that could be used across the globe regardless of destination. OSHA adopted the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, or GHS. This has led to universal pictograms, product identification, labeling and the use of safety data sheets that are readily available on-site and should be updated every year. Watch the video for more details.

MSC offers a wide array of safety services that include both assessments and trainings, including help with signage. See them at MSCDirect.com.

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