

Chemical Safety: Labels and Safety Data Sheets

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

Paints, solvents, adhesives, and other construction chemicals can create health and fire hazards. Before opening a container, know what it holds, what harm it can cause, and how to use it safely. Labels, safety data sheets, and training help everyone working nearby understand those risks.

Read the container before starting

- Check the product name and hazard information before using a chemical. Do not assume that similar-looking paint cans or adhesive containers hold the same product or have the same hazards.
- Look for warning words, pictures, or symbols. If their meaning is unclear, ask the foreman to explain before you begin. A label helps only when you understand it.
- Keep incoming labels readable. Do not peel them off, paint over them, or damage them. If a label is missing or unreadable, stop using that container and report it.
- When transferring a chemical, make sure the receiving container has the product name and hazard information. The exception is a portable container intended only for immediate use by the worker who transferred it—not for sharing or leaving behind.

Find the safety data sheet

- A safety data sheet, often called an SDS, provides chemical-specific safety information. Use it with the label to understand the product's health hazards, physical hazards, and safe handling precautions.
- Know where the sheets are kept before starting. The employer must make the required information readily accessible during every work shift while employees are in their work areas.
- Match the sheet to the product name on the container. Do not use information for a different solvent or adhesive just because it serves a similar purpose.
- If access is electronic, confirm you can actually open the information where you work. If you cannot find or access it, tell the foreman before handling an unfamiliar chemical.

Turn information into safe work

- Before handling harmful substances, understand the safe handling steps, personal hygiene practices, and protective measures for that product. Ask which gloves, eye protection, or other protection the task calls for.
- Discuss how the product's hazards affect nearby trades. Review the handling precautions before painting, cleaning with solvents, or applying adhesives around other workers.
- Training must cover hazardous chemicals when you first receive the assignment and when a new chemical hazard is introduced. A replacement product may bring hazards you have not been trained to recognize.
- Stop and ask when instructions are unclear. Report unlabeled containers, unavailable safety information, or a chemical hazard you do not understand. Do not guess based on color or smell.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You find an unlabeled cup beside an adhesive container. A coworker asks you to use what is in the cup. What would you do before continuing?

Questions for the crew

1. Where can you access safety data sheets while working?
2. When does the immediate-use labeling exception apply?
3. What should you do if a label is unreadable?
4. What must happen when a new chemical hazard is introduced?

Know the product, read its safety information, and ask before using a chemical you do not understand.

Sources: 29 CFR 1910.1200, Hazard communication; 29 CFR 1926.21, Safety training and education

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

REVIEW DATE

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