

UW Hazard Communication Program

A Washington State Department of Labor and Industries standard called Hazard Communication (Right-to-Know) requires that all employees be informed about hazardous chemicals in the workplace through labeling, material safety data sheets (MSDSs), and training.

Labels on manufacturer's containers of hazardous chemicals provide identification of the chemical, immediate hazard warning information, and the manufacturer's name and address. When hazardous chemicals are transferred to containers, the container must be labeled with the chemical identity and appropriate hazard warnings.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), provided by manufacturers, are the primary written means to convey information to employers and employees about the hazards of chemicals. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety maintains a comprehensive collection of MSDSs for the University, (206) 543-7388. Employing departments also have internal MSDS collections. They are also available on the University's MyChem system using your UWNNetID at <http://mychem.ehs.washington.edu>

For more information on the MyChem system, see <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/epomychem>

Employee training on how to obtain hazard information and how to protect against chemical hazards is available from a variety of sources. Ask your supervisor about hazard communication training or call Environmental Health and Safety at (206) 543-7201.

A description of the University of Washington's **Hazard Communication Program** can be found in UW Administrative Policy Statement 12.5 on the web at <http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/APS/12.05.html>

Hazard Communication Poster

The UW Hazard Communication (Worker Right to Know) poster must be posted on every safety bulletin board (UW APS 10.3) Call EH&S at (206) 543-7262 to request a poster or print and post a PDF version that can be found at <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/Forms>

Hazard Communication in Offices

A variety of office and computer products may contain small amounts of hazardous chemicals. Since most of these products are used intermittently and in small quantities, exposure is not expected to produce adverse health effects under "normal conditions of use."

Carbonless copy paper: Older types may release small amounts of formaldehyde and while below the established legal limits, a few individuals may experience various symptoms including headaches and skin, eye or respiratory irritation.

Dry and liquid toners for photocopy machines and laser printers contain chemicals such as carbon black and resins, which can be harmful if high exposure occurs. Prolonged exposure to toner powder or vapors may cause eye and respiratory irritation and should be avoided. These machines may also produce small quantities of ozone, which is a toxic gas with a pungent odor that can irritate eyes, nose, and throat.

Stamp pad and black mimeograph ink can be harmful if swallowed or produce eye irritation on contact.

Glues, rubber cement, correction fluids, duplication fluids, broad-tip marker pens, and cleaning products may contain solvents that can pose both a health and a fire hazard under certain conditions. These chemicals could cause drying and/or irritation to the eyes and skin on direct contact. Vapors from the chemicals can cause irritation to the mucous membranes of the eyes, sinuses, and respiratory system and central nervous.

Employees can protect themselves

from the potential hazards of office and computer products by:

- Following the container label directions
- Using products in areas with air circulation
- Avoiding breathing the vapors
- Preventing contact with skin and eyes
- Keeping containers covered to reduce fumes and spills
- Consulting the MSDSs.

First Aid Information can be found by reading the MSDS. In general:

- For skin contact, wash with soap and water, and for eye exposure, flush eyes with water immediately and for at least 15 minutes.
- For overexposure by inhalation, remove the victim to fresh air, and
- For ingestion, check the MSDS for first aid procedures or call the Washington Poison Center at 1 (800) 222-1222. *If in doubt, seek medical attention immediately.*

Hazard Communication for Asbestos Awareness

Prior to 1993, many buildings at the University of Washington were built with materials containing asbestos such as sprayed-on fireproofing, wallboard, roofing, floor tile, joint compounds, acoustical/ decorative plaster, spackling, fire doors, acoustic ceiling tiles, and pipe insulation.

These materials do not pose a health hazard unless they are damaged or deteriorate to a point where the small asbestos fibers may be released into the air. If small asbestos fibers are inhaled, they can increase the risk of serious health problems, including cancer. The University has a comprehensive asbestos safety program to protect all facility users.

If you notice damage to building materials or if you have questions about asbestos, please call EH&S at (206) 543-7388.

For more information on:

- Accident reporting,
- Biosafety,
- Bloodborne pathogen safety,
- Chemical safety,
- Emergency evacuations,
- Environmental hazards,
- Ergonomics,
- Fire safety,
- First aid,
- Disaster preparedness,
- Hazardous waste disposal,
- Laboratory safety,
- Laboratory research procedures,
- Radiation safety,
- Security,
- Shipping/transporting hazardous materials, or
- Health and safety training

Call EH&S at (206) 543-7262 or check our website at <http://www.ehs.washington.edu>

UW Hazard Communication for Office and Computer Products

