

# Hazard Communication (HazCom) for Office Products

## HAZCOM PROGRAM

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries **Hazard Communication** (HazCom) regulation requires that all employees be informed about hazardous chemicals in the workplace through labeling, safety data sheets (SDSs), and training.

## OFFICE PRODUCTS AND HAZCOM

Employees who work in offices and only work around consumer products in small quantities may be exempt from the HazCom training requirements.

A variety of office products may contain small amounts of hazardous chemicals. As 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.

Dry toners for copiers and printers contain chemicals such as carbon black and resins, and blue print equipment may emit ammonia, all of which can be harmful if high exposure occurs. Prolonged exposure to toner powder or vapors from heated toner may cause eye and respiratory irritation and should be avoided.

Glues, rubber cement, correction fluids, stamp pad ink, marker pens, cleaning and disinfecting products and hand sanitizers 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 and central nervous systems.

Manufacturers of office products are required to:

- **Label** their products with chemical hazard and warning information
- Provide a **safety data sheet (SDS)** with detailed information about hazards of the chemicals in their product

The UW Environmental Health and Safety Department (EH&S) maintains a comprehensive collection of SDSs, including office product SDSs. They are available on the UW MyChem chemical/SDS inventory system using your UWNNetID at the following link: [www.ehs.washington.edu/chemical/mychem](http://www.ehs.washington.edu/chemical/mychem).

**HazCom training** may be required if employees plan to use office products for extended time periods or in higher quantities.

**Employees can protect themselves** from the potential hazards of office products:

- Follow the container label directions
- Use products in areas with good air circulation
- Avoid breathing the vapors
- Prevent contact with skin and eyes
- Keep containers covered to reduce fumes and spills
- Consult the product safety data sheet

**Contact EH&S if you are unsure whether your department's employees are exempt from HazCom training at [ehsdept@uw.edu](mailto:ehsdept@uw.edu) or call 206.543.7262.**

