



RIGHT TO KNOW

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

June 2026

Video Introduction

Today's safety topic begins with a short training video from **Ally Safety**:

Title: *"Hazard Communication Safety Video: Introduction to HazCom & GHS"*

Watch here: <https://youtu.be/RTG77LCfQvU?si=1odX7--rU1j5Wkba>

This video provides information on what is hazard communication, and the dangers of chemicals in the workplace

Purpose

The purpose of today's toolbox talk is to review your rights and responsibilities regarding hazardous chemicals in the workplace. Whether you work in Parks, Public Works, facilities maintenance, Recreation, or administrative support, you may encounter chemicals that can pose health or safety risks if not handled properly.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard, commonly known as the "Right-to-Know" law, ensures that employees have access to information about hazardous chemicals they may use or encounter during their work.

What Is the Right-to-Know?

The Right-to-Know law is based on a simple principle:

Employees have the right to know about the chemical hazards they may be exposed to while performing their jobs.

This includes the right to:

- Know what hazardous chemicals are present in the workplace.
- Understand the health and physical hazards associated with those chemicals.
- Receive training on safe handling procedures.



- Access Safety Data Sheets (SDSs).
- Know what protective measures are required.

No employee should be expected to work with a hazardous chemical without understanding its risks.

Hazardous Chemicals Are Everywhere

When people hear the term "hazardous chemical," they often think of industrial chemicals or laboratory substances. In reality, many common workplace products can present hazards.

Examples include:

- Cleaning and disinfecting products
- Paints and paint thinners
- Gasoline and diesel fuel
- Herbicides and pesticides
- Pool treatment chemicals
- Lubricants and oils
- Battery acids
- Propane and compressed gases

Even products used every day can cause injuries if they are not handled correctly.

Chemical Labels

The first line of defense is reading the label.

Every container of a hazardous chemical should be labeled with information that identifies:

- The product name
- Hazard warnings
- Signal words such as **Danger** or **Warning**
- Precautionary statements
- Manufacturer information

Many labels also contain pictograms that quickly communicate hazards such as:

- Flammability
- Corrosive materials



- Toxicity
- Explosive hazards
- Health hazards

Remember:

- Never use a chemical from an unlabeled container.
 - Never remove or deface chemical labels.
 - Report missing or damaged labels immediately.
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Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

A Safety Data Sheet, or SDS, provides detailed information about a chemical and its hazards.

An SDS contains information such as:

- Chemical ingredients
- Health hazards
- Physical hazards
- Safe handling procedures
- Storage requirements
- Required PPE
- First aid measures
- Spill response procedures

Every employee should know where SDSs are located and how to access them.

Ask Yourself:

- Do I know how to get an SDS for material in the workplace?
- Can I access them quickly in an emergency?

If not, ask your supervisor today.



Routes of Exposure

Hazardous chemicals can enter the body in several ways:

Inhalation

Breathing vapors, dusts, fumes, or mists.

Skin Contact

Absorption through the skin or direct chemical burns.

Eye Contact

Splashes, vapors, or airborne particles entering the eyes.

Ingestion

Accidentally swallowing chemicals due to poor hygiene practices or contamination.

Understanding how exposure occurs helps us take the proper precautions.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Many chemical exposures can be prevented through the proper use of PPE.

Depending on the chemical, required PPE may include:

- Safety glasses
- Chemical-resistant gloves
- Face shields
- Protective clothing
- Respirators

Always use the PPE specified by the SDS and departmental procedures.

Remember:

PPE only works if it is worn correctly and consistently.



Employee Responsibilities

Every employee plays a role in maintaining a safe workplace.

Your responsibilities include:

- ✓ Reading labels before use
 - ✓ Following safe handling procedures
 - ✓ Wearing required PPE
 - ✓ Reviewing SDS information when necessary
 - ✓ Reporting damaged containers, spills, or leaks
 - ✓ Participating in required training
 - ✓ Asking questions when uncertain
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What To Do During a Chemical Exposure

If a chemical exposure occurs:

1. Stop work immediately.
2. Move to a safe location if necessary.
3. Follow first aid instructions found on the SDS.
4. Notify your supervisor.
5. Seek medical attention when required.
6. Report the incident according to departmental procedures.

Prompt reporting helps prevent further injuries and ensures appropriate medical treatment.

