

The Hazard Communication program, also referred to as “HAZCOM” and “The Employee Right to Know Act” was developed to ensure that employers provide employees with important safety information about chemicals used in the workplace.

The goal of HAZCOM is to reduce the risk of chemical-related occupational illnesses and injuries. This is accomplished by making specific information available to help identify and evaluate hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

### **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)**

An SDS is developed by the chemical manufacturer to communicate information on the hazards associated with a particular chemical. The SDS also provides guidance on how you can protect yourself from these hazards.

An SDS must be available for every chemical used in the workplace, and should be available in your shop. Additionally, many SDS's are available online at <http://sds.dr.illinois.edu/Public/Default.aspx>. If you have difficulty locating an SDS, contact Safety & Compliance for assistance.

### **Labels**

Every product container is required to have a label that lists all of the hazard information for the chemical it contains. Labels must include the identity of the product, appropriate hazard warnings, the identity of the manufacturer, relevant first aid information and the chemical ingredients.

If you put chemicals into separate containers, such as spray bottles, label the containers with the chemical's name and hazard warnings (such as flammable, toxic or irritant).

### **Safe Work Practices**

Familiarize yourself with chemical hazards in your workplace. Before working with a product, read the label and SDS and use the correct PPE. Store each chemical in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. And never mix products unless directed by the manufacturer. Dispose of any excess product correctly – not down the drain.

# Tool Box Talk

## Hazard Communication

Chemical manufacturers have started using the symbols below to help identify the hazards associated with a product. These are featured on both the labels and the SDS. You should become familiar with these symbols.

 <p>Flammable if exposed to ignition sources, sparks, or heat. Some substances may give off flammable gases.</p>	 <p>Oxidizers - Can burn without air, or can intensify fire in combustible materials</p>	 <p>Irritant – May cause irritation (redness, rash) or less serious toxic reactions.</p>
 <p>Corrosives – May cause skin burns and permanent eye damage</p>	 <p>May cause serious and prolonged health effects, regardless of exposure time</p>	 <p>Gases Under Pressure Gas released may be very cold. Gas container may explode if heated.</p>
 <p>Toxic material which may cause life threatening effects even in small amounts and with short exposure time</p>	 <p>Explosives – May explode if exposed to fire, heat, shock or friction</p>	 <p>Toxic to aquatic organisms and may cause long lasting effects in the environment</p>