

Hazard Communication (HazCom) Program

Policy · US · Updated 2026-07-13 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A hazard communication (HazCom) program is the written program OSHA requires of workplaces with hazardous chemicals: a current chemical inventory, a safety data sheet (SDS) for every chemical on it, labels on every container, and training that means workers actually understand the hazards they work beside. It is the "right to understand" made operational.

HazCom is perennially among OSHA's most-cited standards, and rarely because a chemical was exotic — the citations are for the missing written program, the SDS nobody can produce, the spray bottle with no label. All three are process failures, and a written program with named owners is the fix.

This template gives you the complete program: responsibilities, the inventory, SDS management, labeling rules for shipped and workplace containers, the training syllabus, and how non-routine tasks and contractors are covered.

Purpose and scope

This program sets out how [Your company] identifies the hazardous chemicals at [site(s)], communicates their hazards, and trains the people who work with or near them. It applies to all employees who use, handle, or may be exposed to hazardous chemicals in any area, and to contractors as described below.

It covers chemicals in production, maintenance, and cleaning alike — the degreaser in the maintenance cage and the sanitizer under the sink are in scope just as much as anything in the process. Consumer products used exactly as a household would use them are outside the standard; anything used harder, longer, or differently is in.

Responsibilities

- Program coordinator ([name/role]): owns this written program, the chemical inventory, and the SDS library; approves new chemicals before they arrive; and arranges training.
- Purchasing ([name/role]): buys no chemical without the coordinator's approval, and requires an SDS from the supplier with or before the first delivery.
- Supervisors: enforce labeling and safe-use rules in their area, check PPE is used as the SDS and our assessments require, and pull unlabeled containers from use on sight.
- Employees: read labels before use, know where the SDSs are and how to find one, use the required PPE, and report damaged labels, missing SDSs, spills, and exposures immediately.

Chemical inventory

The coordinator maintains the master inventory at [location/system]: product name as it appears on the SDS, manufacturer, work area(s) where it is used and stored, quantity range, and the date its SDS was last verified. The inventory is the index to the SDS library — every item on it has a sheet, and every chemical on site is on it.

- New chemicals enter through one door: the coordinator approves the purchase, obtains the SDS, adds the inventory line, and confirms labeling and PPE before first use.
- The inventory is verified by walkaround [frequency, e.g. annually]: anything found on shelves but not on the list is quarantined until resolved; anything on the list but gone is removed.
- Discontinued chemicals are disposed of per [disposal arrangement] — not left to age anonymously in a cabinet.

Safety data sheets

An SDS in the current 16-section format is kept for every chemical on the inventory, at [location: binder location and/or electronic system], and is readily accessible to employees during every shift they work — accessible means reachable without asking a manager, without a password nobody has, and without waiting for Monday. If the electronic system fails, the backup is [binder/offline copy].

- The coordinator requests a current SDS from the supplier when one is missing or when formulation changes, and logs the chase until it arrives.
- Sections 4, 5, and 6 of each SDS — first aid, firefighting, and spill response — are where responders look first; the first aid team and spill responders are walked through them for the chemicals in their areas.
- SDSs for chemicals no longer used are archived, not deleted, per OSHA's exposure-record retention requirements — see OSHA guidance for retention periods.

Labels and other forms of warning

Shipped containers arrive with the manufacturer's GHS label — product identifier, signal word, pictograms, hazard and precautionary statements, supplier details — and those labels stay on and stay legible. Damaged or unreadable labels are reported and replaced, not tolerated.

- Workplace (secondary) containers — spray bottles, buckets, transfer cans — are labeled with at least the product identifier and words, pictures, or symbols that communicate the hazards, per [Your company]'s system: [describe: printed labels from [system] / GHS-style workplace labels].
- The only exception is a portable container filled from a labeled container for the immediate use of the person who fills it, within the shift — set it down and walk away, and it needs a label.
- An unlabeled container of anything is treated as unknown: taken out of service, reported to the supervisor, and identified or disposed of — never sniffed, guessed at, or used up.
- Pipes, tanks, and fixed systems containing hazardous chemicals are identified by [signage/color coding system].

Training and information

Employees are trained before their initial assignment to work with or near hazardous chemicals, and again whenever a new hazard — not merely a new product — is introduced into their work area, as the federal standard requires. Training is delivered in a language and manner each employee understands, and understanding is checked, not assumed.

- Syllabus: the requirements of the HazCom standard; where this program, the inventory, and the SDSs live; how to read a GHS label and an SDS; the hazards of the chemicals in their area; how to detect a release ([monitoring/odor/appearance]); and the protective measures — controls, work practices, PPE, and emergency response.
- Training covers categories of hazard (flammables, corrosives, sensitizers) so the lesson survives a product swap, plus the specific high-hazard chemicals in the area: [list].
- Records — who, what, when, trainer, and the comprehension check — are kept at [system/location].

Non-routine tasks and contractors

Before any non-routine task involving chemical hazards — tank cleaning, line breaking, stripping old coatings — the supervisor and coordinator brief the crew on the hazards, controls, and PPE, and record the briefing. Contractors working on site get the hazard information for the areas they will work in, including where the SDSs are, and provide [Your company] the same for the chemicals they bring; [name/role] exchanges this information before work starts.

Records and review

The written program, inventory, SDS library, and training records are kept at [system/location]. The coordinator reviews this program [frequency, e.g. annually], on any change of chemicals, process, or layout, and after any spill, exposure, or citation. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Walk every storage area — including under sinks and in the maintenance cage — and build the inventory from what is actually there, not from purchase orders.
2. Chase down an SDS for every item on the inventory before you circulate the program; a program that promises sheets it does not have fails its first audit.
3. Pick one workplace-labeling method, buy the supplies, and label every secondary container in a single sweep.
4. Fill in the named roles and route all chemical purchasing through the coordinator from today.
5. Train everyone against the syllabus before their next shift with chemicals, in the language they actually speak, and keep the sign-offs.
6. Check your state plan for right-to-know requirements beyond the federal standard.

Official guidance

- › [OSHA — Hazard communication](#)
- › [OSHA — HazCom standard \(29 CFR 1910.1200\)](#)
- › [CDC NIOSH — Workplace safety and health](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/hazard-communication-program-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.