



Understanding Material Safety Data Sheets

Imagine starting a job where you're asked to use a chemical you've never seen or heard of before. How do you know it's safe? How do you know how to handle the chemical? What if it spills? Fortunately, any chemicals you use at Ahern Rentals will have a Material Safety Data Sheet.

What are Material Safety Data Sheets?

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are meant for employees who can be exposed to hazardous chemicals at the workplace. They provide all the information you need to know about using and handling chemicals safely as well as ways to provide first aid if you come into contact with the chemical.

Each MSDS is divided into sections that tell you various information about the chemical. OSHA specifies that the following information must be included on each sheet:

- Chemical name and company information
- Hazardous ingredients/chemical identity
- Health hazard data
- Emergency/first aid procedures
- Fire and explosion hazard data
- Precautions
- Handling and storage
- Control measures
- Physical/chemical characteristics
- Reactivity

Some MSDS's may contain all of the above plus additional information about the chemical.

Reading the MSDS

At first glance, an MSDS might seem hard to read. But don't worry. Keep the following explanations in mind as you read your MSDS. Remember: Not all Material Safety Data Sheets look alike. While OSHA specifies the content required on the MSDS, the format is left to the manufacturer.

Chemical Name and Company Information

The chemical name and company information section includes the chemical's common name as well as the manufacturer's name and contact information.

Hazardous Ingredients/Chemical Identity

The Hazardous Ingredients/Chemical Identity section lists any dangerous ingredients the chemical contains as well as their chemical composition and exposure limits.

Health Hazards

The Health Hazards section includes information about how the chemical can enter your body, such as through the skin or eyes.

Emergency/First Aid Procedures

The Emergency/First Aid Procedures section lists ways to provide first aid if you come into contact with the chemical.

Fire and Explosion Hazards

The Fire and Explosion Hazards section lets you know if the chemical or its components are flammable and how to fight a fire if one occurs.

Precautions

The Precautions section includes ways to handle spills and leaks.

Handling and Storage

The Handling and Storage section gives you guidelines for handling the chemical, such as avoiding contact with your eyes. This section also tells you how to store the chemical.

Control Measures

The Control Measures section shows you the type of personal protective equipment to use while handling the chemical.

Physical and Chemical Characteristics

The Physical and Chemical Characteristics section includes things like how the chemical looks and smells, its boiling point, and the chemical's evaporation rate.

Reactivity

The Reactivity section lets you know how stable the chemical is and how it reacts with other chemicals.

Where to Find MSDS

All Material Safety Data Sheets are kept in a binder at your location. You can find the binder in the manager's office that's closest to the shop. Additional binders are kept in the parts room and the paint booth, if your location has one.

Every employee has a right to see their company's MSDS. Your Parts Manager or Safety Coordinator updates and maintains the MSDS binders. Contact these individuals or your supervisor if you're having trouble locating them.

When to Use MSDS

Always read the Material Safety Data Sheets before using any chemical product. All the chemicals you use must have an MSDS. Newly ordered chemicals must have an MSDS supplied by the vendor. If a chemical does not have an MSDS, tell your supervisor. Do not use any chemical product until an MSDS is obtained.

When using an MSDS, try not to get overwhelmed by its contents. Remember to keep in mind the most important parts:

- Know the chemical name
- Understand its hazards
- Know how to handle and store the chemical safely
- Be aware of how to act in an emergency situation

The information in the MSDS was written to help keep you safe. If you have any questions or concerns about the chemicals you use or the MSDS included with them, contact Risk Management at (702) 368-6793.

Revision History

Rev.	Date	Change Description & Section	Approver/Contributor/Writer
002	Mar 4, 2008	Reissuing safety topic for March; no text changes made.	Abby Rotstein
001	Aug 13, 2007	Initial Release.	Rene Casas/Libby Craver/Abby Rotstein