

**April 2013**
*We ' r e P r o u d o f O u r W o r k*
**Communication of  
Chemical Hazards**
**Something to Think About!!**
**“Don’t cry because it’s over,  
Smile because it happened”**
*-- Dr. Seuss*

There are a number of topics on which imi as an employer has a responsibility to educate it's work force. I try to cover these topics in this venue with a certain amount of regularity. One topic that I have not covered recently is **hazard communication**. So that is where we are headed this month.

If you don't realize it or don't think about, the world we live and work in is getting smaller all the time. Goods and services are shipped regularly throughout the world. The United States ships all types of things, in particular chemical goods, to every corner of the globe. The reverse is true as well.

The developed and not so developed world has certain standards that are required to be met in an effort to keep their work force safe. Hazard communication associated with chemicals is one area where some difficulty has been experienced because of language and customs.

If you have reviewed the information on **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)** you know that the standard to which MSDS in the United States were held left a lot to be desired. Finding information on a MSDS took some studying. So a new approach to chemical safety, known as **Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals**, has been introduced to take the place of the Hazard Communication Standard, commonly referred to as HazCom.

The HazCom standard served as the compliance standard for ensuring worker safety while working with chemicals. HazCom defined the need for documentation, MSDS, training about the harm that chemicals can cause and the protective measures that should be taken.

The new GHS is not a regulation or standard but a worldwide initiative that promotes standard criteria for classifying chemicals according to their health, physical and environmental hazards. The information is communicated through the use of pictograms, hazard statements and signal words on product labels and **safety data sheets**

(**SDS**). The intent is to make SDS understood in any country around the world.

The GHS tells us how to: 1) determine if the chemical is hazardous, and 2) prepare a label or SDS as appropriate.

The GHS classifications for hazardous chemicals are **Physical Hazards** and **Health Hazards**.

Physical hazards include: explosives, flammable gases, flammable aerosols, oxidizing gases, gases under pressure, flammable liquids, flammable solids, self-reactive substances, pyrophoric liquids, pyrophoric solids, self-heating substances, substances that emit flammable gases, oxidizing liquids, oxidizing solids, organic peroxides.

Health hazards include: acute toxicity, skin irritation, eye effects, sensitization, germ cell mutagenicity, carcinogenicity, reproductive toxicity, target organ systemic toxicity, aspiration toxicity.

As an employer, imi has the responsibility to make sure workers understand these classifications for the chemicals that we work with. Thankfully most of the chemicals that we work with do not have many of the most serious physical and health hazards outlined above.

The intent of the new GHS is to provide universal understanding of chemical hazards regardless of the language of the worker. This is accomplished using pictures to communicate the dangers. Each picture, called a pictogram, consists of a symbol on a white background framed in a red diamond shaped border. The pictogram represents a distinct hazard. A few of the pictograms, and what they mean, that you might see on products in our work places in the near future:


**Health Hazard**

Carcinogen, mutagen, respiratory sensitizer, target organ toxin, aspiration toxin, reproductive toxin

**Our Goal For 2013 Must Be . . . . .  
Safety Records Clean and Incident Free**

Have a  
Safe and  
Healthy  
April!!

We are on the web  
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**Safety is never an accident: it is  
always the result of high inten-  
tion, sincere effort, intelligent di-  
rection and skilled execution! It  
represents the wise choice of  
many alternatives!!**

*Continued from the front page*



**Flame**  
Flammables, combustibles, etc.



**Exclamation Mark**  
Skin or eye irritant, skin sensitizer, nar-  
cotic effects, respiratory tract irritant



**Gas Cylinder**  
Gases under pressure.



**Corrosion**  
Skin corrosion/burns, eye damage,  
corrosive to metals.

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

please sign below, confirming the material was reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ April 2013

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**Environment (non-mandatory)**  
Aquatic toxicity



**Skull and Crossbones**  
Acute toxicity (fatal or toxic) (*it looks to  
me that if this is so bad, the skull should  
have a more scary face!?*)

This month's topic is merely an introductory discussion of what is coming. We have already started this discussion in our weekly toolbox talks and you will be hearing more about this in the next few months. You may soon see new SDS arriving with chemical shipments. Please take the time to review those sheets to familiarize yourself with the information. If you have questions, let one of the EHS group know.



Spring will surely be here soon!

It is March 25 as I work on this newsletter and we are having a blizzard outside. 8" of snow and more coming! UGH!!