Hazardous Substances – **General**

Labelling of chemicals >

Hazardous chemicals need appropriate labelling to provide both workers and the public with enough information to safely use them. Under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act* and *Dangerous Goods Act*, there are two systems of labelling of chemicals required. While this may appear complicated and confusing, the two systems overlap and are complementary.

Legislation

The *Workplace Health and Safety Act* requires substances found to be hazardous by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council's (ASCC) and used in the workplace to be labeled with information relating to the hazards of using them. The labeling requirements are specified in the National Code of Practice for the Labeling of Workplace Substances [NOHSC: 2012 (1994)]. The code of practice lists the information required and contains standard phrases and wording that should be used. The label required on hazardous substances should contain the following:

- Signal words (eg. 'Warning', 'Poison');
- Dangerous goods class label(s);
- Identification information - product name, chemical name, UN (United Nations) number, ingredients;
- Risk phrases (eg. 'Harmful if swallowed', 'flammable');
- Directions for use;
- Safety phrases (eg. 'Keep container dry', 'Keep away from heat');
- First aid procedures;
- Emergency procedures;
- Details of manufacturer/importer;
- Expiry date where applicable;
- Reference to the material safety data sheet (MSDS).

All the above should be provided on containers of 500ml or 500g or more.

Containers smaller than this may omit the emergency procedures information, and if the container is too small, then signal words, product name and manufacturer/supplier details are acceptable as a minimum. In these circumstances the use of alternative packaging or provision of an information leaflet instead of full label should be considered.

NT WorkSafe is the administrative arm of the Work Health Authority and administers the *Workplace Health and Safety Act*, the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act*, the *Dangerous Goods (Road and Rail Transport) Act*, the *Dangerous Goods Act* and the *Radioactive Ores and Concentrates (Packaging and Transport) Act* and related Regulations on behalf of the Northern Territory Government.

There are certain exceptions to the above, depending on the intended use of the product. The requirements are explained fully in the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations* and the NOHSC Code.

Dangerous goods act

The Dangerous Goods Act has requirements for the labeling of chemicals classed as dangerous goods in the Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail (ADG Code). The labeling requirements vary depending on the class, packaging group and container size (very small containers are exempt from these requirements). In general, the label must contain all or some of the following:

- Correct shipping name (ie. the name used for the product in the alphabetical list of dangerous goods in the ADG Code;
- UN number and packaging group;
- Class and subsidiary risk labels (sometimes called hazard diamonds);
- Australian name and address of manufacturer, importer, agent or consignor;
- HAZCHEM code;
- The phrase 'In a transport emergency call 000, Police or Fire Brigade'.

In addition, all containers and packages used for the transport of dangerous goods must be approved and be marked with UN approval numbers.

The ADG Code provides details of the form and size of labels, and must be consulted to determine if labels are required as the details are beyond the scope of this information bulletin.

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