

Hazardous Substances – General

08.01.01

What are they? >

This is one of a series of information bulletins which have been written to assist the employer to manage risks from their hazardous substances. The bulletins make up a package which reflects the Australian Safety and Compensation Council's (ASCC) approach to managing workplace hazardous substances, which is currently being adopted throughout Australia.

What substances are hazardous?

Division 5 Hazardous substances, of Part 7 of the [Workplace Health and Safety Regulations](#) apply to substances that have similar health effects to those listed below.

Hazardous Substances can be:

- toxic;
- harmful;
- corrosive;
- irritating;
- sensitising;
- carcinogenic (cause cancer);
- mutagenic (cause genetic damage);
- teratogenic (cause damage to foetus).

Most hazardous substances are industrial chemicals, but they can also be pesticides, paints, gases and fumes which are used or produced as a by product in the workplace.

ASCC has produced a [Hazardous Substances Information System \(HSIS\)](#) which includes most Hazardous Substances used in the industry. Radioactive and infectious substances are not included on this list but are covered under other legislation.

How to find out whether a substance is hazardous

Manufacturers and suppliers (which includes importers) of hazardous substances must ensure they provide accurate information about what they are supplying.

The ASCC [Hazardous Substances Information System \(HSIS\)](#) and the [Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances \[NOHSC:1008\(2004\)\]](#) can provide manufacturers with information on how to determine whether a substance is hazardous.

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Labels

Provide the users with easy to understand information on precautions for use, health hazards and general first aid information if there is an emergency. Other information normally included on a label is the manufacturer's name, address and contact number.

Material safety data sheets (MSDs)

Are required to be provided to a purchaser of any hazardous substance by the manufacturer or supplier on request or when first purchased. Retailers are exempt from providing MSDS to customers, except if they supply hazardous substances in packages of quantities greater than 30 litres or 30 kilograms.

If substances are produced in the workplace such as gases or other emissions, the employer will need to check the ASCC Hazardous Substances Information System (HSIS) to determine if these are hazardous.

Substances which may be hazardous are: solvents, pesticides, glues, petroleum products, heavy metals, paints and acids.

If in doubt about whether a substance is hazardous

Contact the manufacturer on the label of the container and request an MSDS or contact NT WorkSafe for further information. Treat a substance as hazardous if you are in doubt.

Other NT WorkSafe information bulletins in the 08 Hazardous Substances series:

- [08.01.02](#) Hazardous Substances – Why regulations are required
- [08.01.06](#) Hazardous Substances – Provision of information by manufacturers, suppliers and importers
- [08.01.07](#) Hazardous Substances – Information employers must provide
- [08.01.08](#) Hazardous Substances – Assessment of risk to health from working with hazardous substances
- [08.01.09](#) Hazardous Substances – Exposure control
- [08.01.10](#) Hazardous Substances – Training employers should provide

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