



OH&S TIP SHEET

Health and Safety in Early Childhood Services

Material safety data sheet

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is a document that contains information about a particular chemical substance. OHS laws require that a manufacturer or importer of a hazardous or dangerous goods substance must ensure that a MSDS is prepared for the substance before it is first supplied for use at a workplace.

There is some important workplace health and safety information in an MSDS, and employers should, wherever available and practicable, ensure they have up-to-date MSDS for chemicals stored onsite kept in a folder, along with the chemicals register.

A MSDS must be reviewed by the manufacturer or importer as often as is necessary to ensure that it contains accurate and current information or at minimum every five years.

It is important to make sure that the MSDSs at your workplace are no more than five years old.

MSDSs do not need to be supplied to customers if:

- goods are supplied in consumer packages
- fuel is supplied to a vehicle
- class 2 dangerous goods (gases) are supplied in a container provided by the purchaser.

Often an MSDS can still be obtained – even for those only supplied in consumer packages –

by simply completing an Internet search. It is recommended that the employer does collect MSDSs for chemicals, including those only supplied in consumer packages, as the advice in the MSDSs is important for workplace health and safety.

LABELS

The employer must ensure chemicals stored at their service are clearly labelled.

Always avoid having chemical substances in unlabelled containers at the workplace, and never store chemicals in containers with food or drink or where they could be mistaken as such.

CHEMICALS REGISTER

It is a requirement of the legislation that an employer must keep a register of dangerous goods and hazardous substances. These registers may be combined into one.

The register must contain:

- a list of all hazardous substances and dangerous goods stored and handled in the workplace
- a copy of the relevant MSDSs supplied to the employer's workplace. All MSDSs should have issue dates within the last five years.

The employer must ensure that the register is easily accessible to any employee at the premises, or any other person who is likely to be affected by the hazardous substance or dangerous goods. However, there are some exemptions such as:

- for hazardous substances and dangerous goods, if the employer is a retailer and the substance is supplied in a consumer package intended for retail sale.

It is recommended that the employer record all chemicals in this register, not only those that are dangerous goods and hazardous substances. It is also recommended to include those that are in consumer packages.



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