



The Pennsylvania State University Right to Know Program

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Reference: PA Act 1984-159

I. PURPOSE

The above noted regulation sets forth "to ensure that the hazards of chemicals produced or imported by chemical manufacturers or importers are evaluated, and that information concerning their hazards is transmitted to affected employers and employees. The transmittal of information is to be accomplished by means of comprehensive hazard communication programs, which are to include container labeling and other forms of warning, material safety data sheets and personnel training."

This program as well as the regulation is otherwise referred to as the "Right to Know Law", which in effect is designed to provide knowledge, warning, protection and training to employees who may be exposed to hazards of chemicals and other materials. Penn State University began educating its employees on Right to Know in 1986.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

EHS is designated as having responsibility for the administration of the PSU Right to Know Program and will act as the general Right to Know Program Coordinator for PSU.

All personnel (faculty, staff, technical assistants and certain matriculating students) will fully participate in the program as it may apply to their work area and work responsibility. Each supervisor shall ensure that those employees and areas under his supervision comply with this program.

The "Right to Know Program" contains seven major provisions:

1. It creates a list of 2336 chemicals that are defined as hazardous substances.
2. It requires that a list of hazardous substances used be posted where you work.
3. It requires that the list be made available to you.
4. It requires that a MSDS (material safety data sheet) for each substance be made available to you. The MSDS tells you about the hazards of a substance and what you can do to reduce those hazards.
5. It requires labeling of hazardous substance to identify hazardous ingredients and primary hazards.
6. It requires the employer (PSU) to provide an initial and annual training program for employees who may be exposed to any of the 2336 listed substances.
7. It allows you to refuse to work with a hazardous substance if the employer fails to provide you or your representative with an MSDS, or fails to furnish proof of a diligent effort to obtain the MSDS.

There are several exemptions to the Right to Know Act:

- Chemicals used in research, teaching and testing laboratories
- Chemicals in storage areas are not required to be on the list of hazardous substances
- Substance bought for personal use or consumption such as foodstuffs, cosmetics, tobacco and prescriptions are not required to be listed.

The written "Right to Know Program" for the University with its associated inventory list, records, materials, etc., will be maintained and located in the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) office. Personnel may review the program and chemical listing at this location. A copy of this written "Right to Know Program" may also be reviewed on the EHS website.

IV. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE LIST/HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE SURVEY FORM

The Hazardous Substance List, prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I), is a compilation of hazardous substances from other lists promulgated by the following agencies:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- The international Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)
- The National Toxicology Program
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH)
- The National Cancer Institute (NCI)

This list shall also include any other substance or mixture designated by L&I as hazardous because of its known or probable adverse human or environmental effect. The Hazardous Substance List serves as a master list of chemical that must be included on the Hazardous Substance Survey Form.

The Hazardous Substance Survey Form (HSSF) was developed by L&I to collect information about hazardous substances, special hazardous substances, and environmental hazards that may be present at a work site. It is used to inform employees about hazardous substance present at the workplace, provide local emergency response organizations an inventory of hazardous substances at a facility to assist with planning for and responding to emergencies, and to provide the public with information about hazardous substances at facilities in their communities. EHS is responsible for preparing the annual HSSF for the University.

V. MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS)

The EHS office serves as the central collection point and repository for Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for the University. To request an MSDS during normal working hours Monday through Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, contact EHS at (814) 865-6391 or by fax at (814) 863-7427 or stop by 6 Eisenhower Parking Deck. During holidays, weekends or evening hours, or in the event of an emergency, contact Police Services at (814) 863-1111. When requesting an MSDS please provide chemical name, manufacturer of the product and product number if available. MSDSs are also available electronically through the EHS website from numerous on-line databases.

Each Department, Administrative Unit or laboratory may choose, and are encouraged, to maintain a collection of MSDSs for the materials that they commonly handle. If and when new hazardous substances are introduced to the area, EHS should be contacted to provide MSDSs on these new materials.

In the event an MSDS is not available or should a new chemical or material be introduced for use without a required MSDS, the immediate supervisor should be promptly notified. That supervisor for the area will contact the manufacture or supplier and obtain the MSDS for the product. If the MSDS can not be obtained and EHS has been notified, generic safety data may be substituted.

VI. LABELS AND LABELING

All hazardous chemicals or materials on hand or received must have a label that will specify at least:

1. The chemical name (common name, no formulas, no chemical shorthand).
2. Any specific warning or other hazard information.

A hazardous chemical or material label shall not be removed from its container, nor shall such a label be defaced.

If a hazardous chemical or material must be removed or transferred from its original container, the new container must be labeled with the same information listed above (i.e., chemical name and primary hazard[s]).

VII. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

All personnel will be informed of the "Right to Know Law" annually, and/or at time of initial assignment and annually thereafter.

General program information and training will be accomplished by on-line training course with supplemental materials, lecture, or combination, and will cover the contents of this program to include a review of the following information concerning hazardous substances or hazardous mixtures:

1. Their location
2. Their properties
3. The chemical and common name
4. The acute and chronic effects
5. The symptoms arising from exposure
6. The potential for flammability, explosivity and reactivity
7. Appropriate emergency treatment
8. Appropriate personal protective equipment and proper conditions for safe use
9. Emergency procedures for spills, leaks, fires, pipeline breakdowns or other accidents

X. PROGRAM MAINTENANCE - OTHER FUNCTIONS

Since EHS has the responsibility for maintaining MSDSs for the entire University, any MSDS received along with hazardous substance/chemical shipments should be forwarded to the Environmental Health and Safety Office, 6 Eisenhower Parking Deck, University Park, PA, 16802.

Copies of newly received MSDSs may be retained at the laboratory/unit receiving them.

Appendices

Appendix A [PA Worker and Community Right to Know Law](#)

Appendix B [RTK Training Slides](#)

Appendix C [RTK Training Handouts](#)

Appendix D [Hazardous Substance Survey Form \(sample\)](#)

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