

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

GUIDELINES ON MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS

PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to inform staff and students of current and relevant information required to comply with Victorian legislation in relation to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS

If a substance is classified as a Hazardous Substance (HS) or as a Dangerous Goods (DG), an MSDS must be prepared by the manufacturer or importer and be made available to purchasers of the substance.

The current MSDS must be obtained on or before the first time the HS and/or DG is supplied for use in the workplace. Only MSDSs prepared by the manufacturer or importer are acceptable.

Requirements of a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must:

- be written in English and contain the following information
- have a date of preparation or review,
- have the Manufacturer or importers details, including an Australian address and contact number(s),
- be less than five (5) years old.
- Have one of the following statements:
 - “Hazardous according to the criteria of NOHSC (or Work safe Australia)” (the chemical is classed as a Hazardous Substance) ; or
 - “Not classified as Hazardous according to the criteria of NOHSC (or WorkSafe Australia)” (the chemical is not classed as a Hazardous Substance)
- Have the words Dangerous Good if the chemical has been classed as a Dangerous Good
- Have the following information if the chemical has been classed as a Dangerous Good:
 - (DG) Class
 - Subsidiary Risk (If applicable)
 - Packing Group (If applicable)
 - UN number
- product name;
- chemical and physical properties of the substance;
- identity of the ingredients;
- proportion (or proportion ranges) of the ingredients in the substance;
- health hazard information;
- first aid information;
- precautions for safe use;
- exposure standards (if there are any applicable);

MSDS from the Internet

If the manufacturer/importer/supplier refers you to the company's web site for you to download the MSDS then only download MSDS which includes the above information.

If any of the information listed above is missing from the MSDS you have been supplied with, then the MSDS is not compliant with Victorian legislation. In this circumstance, contact the company concerned. If the company fails to send a correct MSDS, contact the Occupational Health and Safety Section who will contact the company concerned and WorkSafe Victoria.

If a Hazardous Substance and/or Dangerous Good is supplied for use to the workplace in consumer packages from a retailer or retail warehouse operator, an MSDS must be obtained from the manufacturer or importer of the substance.

Copies of MSDS must be readily accessible to any employee who could be exposed to a hazardous substance. MSDS should be kept in a location convenient to the work area in which the substance is used, and all employees likely to be exposed to a hazardous substance should be aware of the MSDS location.

Information in an MSDS must not be altered. Additional information may be appended to the MSDS, but it must be marked clearly to indicate that it is not part of the original.

Only MSDS from the manufacturer/importer/supplier are appropriate for purchased chemicals.

Chemwatch MSDSs

MSDS can be downloaded from the CHEMWATCH data base and in most circumstances these MSDS will be additional information to that provided in the manufacturer/importer/supplier's MSDS which will be the primary source of information.

In the case of conflicting information between two MSDS select the one with the higher risk information.

Chemwatch MSDS can be used:

- If you are unable to source an MSDS from the manufacturer/importer/supplier's for any reason (they have gone out of business, etc)
- You order a chemical from overseas, you are the only one who is going to use the chemical and the manufacturer/importer/supplier's does not supply you with a current, compliant MSDS
- As the MSDS for all solutions (Dilutions, buffers, etc) you prepare.

The current format of the Chemwatch MSDS is known as the "16 Header format". This is the format that all MSDS will be required to be written in from the beginning of 2008.

New MSDS Format in 2008

16 Header format – due to come into effect in 2008

1. Identification (Chemical Product and Company)
2. Hazard identification
3. Composition/information on ingredients
4. First Aid measures
5. Fire-fighting measures
6. Accidental release measures
7. Handling and storage
8. Exposure control/personal protection
9. Physical and chemical properties
10. Stability and reactivity
11. Toxicological information
12. Ecological information
13. Disposal considerations
14. Transport information
15. Regulatory information
16. Other information

Contact the OHS unit for further guidance and information if required