

Basic Format of Safety Data Sheets

There are many hazardous chemicals in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)¹ requires chemical manufacturers and distributors to communicate hazards to users, and clearly label containers with Safety Data Sheets.

A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is a document containing information on the properties of each chemical, including:

- the physical health and environmental health hazards
- protective measures
- safety precautions for handling, storing, and transporting the chemical

It's important to know where the SDS are located in the workplace, and how to read them to safely handle chemicals. Below is a summary of what you can expect to find in each section of an SDS.



Safety Data Sheet information

According to OSHA, each SDS has 16 sections outlining specific information about the chemical.

Sections 1 – 8

General information about the chemical, identification, hazards, composition, safe handling practices, and emergency control measures. This information is helpful for those who need the information quickly.

Sections 9 – 11, 16

Technical and scientific information, such as physical and chemical properties, stability and reactivity information, toxicological information, exposure control information, and date of preparation or last revision.

Sections 12 – 15

Information on disposal, transportation, and regulatory information. OSHA will not enforce the content of these sections because they concern matters handled by other agencies.

Q&A

Here are some questions to help start conversations around the Safety Data Sheets in your workplace:

- Do the SDS on this jobsite follow a specified sequential 16-section format?
- Are the SDS readily accessible to all employees, for all chemicals utilized in the work location? If yes, where are they located?
- Is there a designated person who obtains and maintains the SDS?
- Do container labels have standardized signal words, hazard statements, and precautionary statements to help ensure you know the potential dangers and necessary safeguards you should follow when working with that product?

For more information, please review the **OSHA Hazard Communication Standard** or download the **OSHA Small Entity Compliance Guide for Employers That Use Hazardous Chemicals**.



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¹Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Standard 1910.1200, 2018