

HAZARD COMMUNICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD?

- The purpose of the 29 CFR 1910.1200 “HazCom” or “HCS” standard is to ensure that the hazards of all chemicals produced or imported are classified, and that information concerning the classified hazards is transmitted to employers and employees. Key elements are training, chemical labels, Safety Data Sheets, and a list of all hazardous chemicals in the work area.
- This standard is enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). External auditors, such as those from AAALAC, CAP, or Joint Commission, may assess Duke’s compliance with this standard.



WHAT IS A SAFETY DATA SHEET?

The Safety Data Sheet, or SDS, is written or printed material used to convey the hazards of a hazardous chemical product. It contains 16 sections of important chemical information, including:

- Chemical identification, manufacturer and emergency contact information, ingredients, physical and chemical characteristics;
- Physical and health hazards, including relevant exposure limits;
- Precautions for safe handling, storage, and clean-up of spills, including recommended personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- Emergency and first aid procedures.

WHEN IS AN SDS REQUIRED (OR NOT)?

- An SDS is required for any chemical that is considered “hazardous” by OSHA.
- SDSs are specifically NOT required for food or alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, or drugs in solid, final form for direct administration to the patient (such as tablets or capsules that will be taken whole by mouth). They are also not required for consumer products in the workplace if those products are used in a manner similar to the intended consumer use. Go to [OSHA Safety Data Sheet Quick Card](#) for more information.



Health Hazard
Pictogram

Go to [OSHA Hazard Communication Standard Pictogram Quick Card](#) to view all nine pictograms and their defined hazards.

HOW DO I OBTAIN AN SDS?

- Go to <http://www.safety.duke.edu/occupational-hygiene-safety/sds-resources> and follow the instructions there. (Note that there are special SDS resources for healthcare employees.)
- If you are unable to find an SDS this way, try searching the internet for “SDS” and the name of the product or call OESO-Occupational Hygiene and Safety at 919-684-5996 for assistance.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LABELING?

- If you buy a commercial product, it will come with the appropriate label information: chemical name, signal word, hazard warnings, precautionary statements, pictogram(s), and supplier identification. Go to [OSHA HCS Standard Label Quick Card](#) for more information.
- If you transfer the chemical into a secondary container and do not use it immediately, it must be labeled with: 1) the required information from the original container label OR 2) the product identifier AND general information regarding the chemical hazards that, together with other information available, will provide employees with specific information regarding physical and health hazards.
- Drugs dispensed by a pharmacy to a healthcare provider for direct administration to a patient are exempted from labeling.