

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

What is a Hazardous Substance?

A hazardous substance is classified as a material that is both toxic and reactive and whose potential for human injury is high if released.

A hazardous substance can take many forms – gas, powder, liquid, solid or dust. The product may be pure or diluted. Some hazardous substances are colourless, odourless and can be easily mistaken for something non-hazardous e.g. water



Examples of some potentially hazardous substances include:

- Paints
- Drugs
- Cleaning Products
- Degreasers
- Detergents
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas
- Gas Cylinders
- Refrigerant Gases
- Pesticides
- Herbicides
- Diesel Fuel
- Petrol



What if something goes wrong?

Contact your supervisor or WHS Department for the Safety Data Sheet. This provides guidance on clean up, disposal & First Aid for the substance. **Remember, always read the label first!**



HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES – Q & A

What are hazardous chemicals?

Hazardous substances are those that cause an adverse effect on health. Examples of hazardous substances include poisons, substances that cause burns or skin and eye irritation, and substances that may cause cancer. Many hazardous substances are classified as dangerous goods.

What if I am not sure if a substance is hazardous?

An unknown substance should be treated as hazardous until it is proven not to be hazardous. If you encounter an unknown and unlabelled chemical or substance you should notify your manager.

What should I do when I need to use a hazardous substance?

Read the SDS carefully before you use any hazardous substance for the first time, or any time you are unsure about the risks or necessary precautions. The SDS can help you reduce the risks (but not the underlying hazard) associated with the materials in your workplace

What is a Safety Data Sheet (SDS)?

A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is a document that provides information on the properties of hazardous substances and how they affect health and safety in the workplace. For example it includes information on the identity, health and physicochemical hazards, safe handling and storage, emergency procedures, and disposal considerations of hazardous chemicals and their constituents.

An SDS is an important source of information that should be considered when making any decisions on managing risk from hazardous substances in the workplace.

Where can I get a copy of the SDS?

In order to meet legislative requirements regarding the storage and usage of hazardous substances, RGRC have a subscription to a web based program called Chemwatch. Chemwatch stores all hazardous substances SDS's. Each community has a specific log-in for Chemwatch. If you need help with Chemwatch please contact Work Health and Safety at WHS@ropergulf.nt.gov.au