

Toolbox Talks 2

099: Unsafe Conditions: Toxins

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Review your company's Hazard Communication System documents and any procedures related to handling chemicals.

What this Safety Talk covers:

This Safety Talk addresses unsafe conditions with toxins.

Discussion notes:

Unsafe conditions with toxins

- Damaged labels on containers. Replace damaged labels, or transfer the contents to a new container. If it's not your container, report the problem to the appropriate supervisor.
- Unlabeled containers. Dispose of the container. You don't know what's in it.
- Open containers. Keeping containers closed reduces the amount of solvent or other toxin released into the air you breathe. Use the smallest possible work container, and keep lids on any container not actually in use. Bonus: This reduces the spill hazard.
- Improperly stored containers. Product labels provide storage instructions. Report storage errors or correct them. Never store flammables next to corrosives.
- MSDS not available. This is a work stopper. Obtain the MSDS. If doing so is much of a problem, contact your foreman.
- Emergency showers, eyewashes, ventilation hoods, or other appropriate safety equipment missing or inoperative. This is a work stopper. Contact your foreman.
- PPE not available. Don't substitute. Obtain the required PPE.
- PPE available, but not adequate. If the PPE isn't serviceable or clean, or is in some other way defective, replace it.
- Leaks. Report the leak. Don't work in the area until you can determine it's safe to do so. If the leak is still awaiting repair, determine what the worst case scenario might be and take the necessary precautions.
- Spills. If you encounter a spill or puddle, report it and leave the area. Don't clean it up until you have both the permission and the proper equipment to do so. Don't work in the area until you can determine it's safe to do so.
- Careless cleaning. For example, another crew stirs up dust in a chemical processing area. Leave the area and report the problem. Don't work in the area until you can determine it's safe to do so. That may be possible with PPE, or just waiting.
- Unsafe acts of others. The unsafe acts of other people create an unsafe condition for you. In some cases, you just need to politely let the other person know what's being done wrong. In other cases, you need to report the person's conduct. Use your judgment as to which way is appropriate. Always report safety violations that are intentional. It's surely intentional if you inform the other person the act is unsafe and she or he does it anyhow.

Review and discussion

1. What should you do if you can't read the label on a container, due to label damage?
2. Is it safe to use something from an unlabeled container? Why or why not?

