



## Safety Data Sheets Information

### 1 What is an SDS?

A Safety Data Sheet is a document that provides information about a hazardous substance and how it should be used and how to avoid harm when using it at the workplace.

### 2. What information will be provided in an SDS?

An SDS for a hazardous substance will describe its properties and uses, including:

- *the identity of the hazardous substance*  
eg. product information to identify the hazardous substance(s) and basic information on uses;
- *chemical and physical properties*  
eg. physical description including description of the mixture or formulation if applicable;
- *health hazard information*  
eg. health effects from exposure and first aid information;
- *precautions for use*  
eg. correct application and common uses, ventilation requirements, equipment for personal protection and information on flammability; and
- *safe handling information*  
eg. safe storage in the workplace, safe transporting, dealing with spills and disposal and information for fire fighting and emergency services.

### 3 Who provides an SDS?

#### **Manufacturers and Importers**

*The person who manufactures or imports a hazardous substance for use at a workplace must:*

- prepare an SDS for the hazardous substance;
- ensure an SDS is available before the hazardous substance is supplied to the workplace; and
- review and revise SDS to keep them up-to-date, at least every five years. The information provided in a SDS must conform with the requirements of the *National Code of Practice for the Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets [NOHSC:2011(1994)]* which can be accessed at [www.nohsc.gov.au](http://www.nohsc.gov.au)

Note that, it is anticipated that the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 will be amended to also include the revised *National Code of Practice [NOHSC:2011(2003)]*, declared in 2003.



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### Suppliers

*The supplier of a hazardous substance for use at a workplace must ensure that a current SDS for the hazardous substance is provided when a person:*

- purchases the hazardous substance from the supplier for the first time;
- purchases the hazardous substance from the supplier at a later time and requests an SDS; or
- purchases the hazardous substance from a retailer (who originally obtained it from the supplier), upon request of that person.

### Employers, main contractors or self-employed people

- An employer, main contractor or self-employed person must be provided with an SDS before or upon the first time the hazardous substance is supplied to the workplace.
- An employer, main contractor or self-employed person must consult with all persons who might be exposed to the hazardous substance at the workplace about the intention to use the hazardous substance at the workplace and the safest methods of using it.
- An employer, main contractor or self-employed person must ensure that an SDS for each hazardous substance is readily available to any person at the workplace who might be exposed to the substances.
- An employer, main contractor or self-employed person must ensure that no alteration is made to an SDS (with the only exception being where the employer is also the importer of the hazardous substance and an overseas SDS requires alteration to conform with the Australian regulations for an SDS).

#### **4 When is an SDS required at the workplace?**

A current SDS must be obtained by employers and must be made readily available to employees who may be exposed at the workplace whenever a hazardous substance is used.

#### **5 When must an SDS be supplied?**

There are four instances when an SDS must be supplied:

- when a hazardous substance is provided to a workplace;
- when a hazardous substance has already been purchased for use at a workplace and the purchaser asks for an SDS;
- when a potential purchaser makes a request for an SDS; and
- whenever a SDS is revised.

#### **6 When does an SDS expire?**

The information in SDS must be kept current. SDS' must be updated by the manufacturer or importer at a minimum of every five years.

The employer should check the dates of all SDS and ensure that all SDS at the workplace are "current".



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**7 How should a third party SDS be used?**

An SDS produced by the manufacturer or importer of a hazardous substance must be obtained and used as the main source of information. “Third party SDS” (which are produced by other parties and not the manufacturer or importer) can be used as supplementary information.

**8 When should employees be consulted at the workplace about hazardous substances?**

An employer who intends to use a hazardous substance at the workplace must consult with all employees about the intention to use the hazardous substance at the workplace and the safest methods of using it.

**9 Who must have access to an SDS?**

Every person in the workplace who may be exposed to a hazardous substance must have ready access to the current SDS.

**10 How must an SDS be kept at the workplace?**

An employer, main contractor or self-employed person must:

- set up and keep current a register that contains (as a minimum) a list of all the hazardous substances used at the workplace and an SDS for each hazardous substance used; and
- ensure that the register is readily available to all persons who are or who might be exposed to a hazardous substance at the workplace, including emergency service personnel.

An SDS may be provided electronically if all employees (including shift workers) have access to the computer and provided that all employees are trained on how to use the system.