

■ **STATE HEALTH, SAFETY AND HOUSING LAWS (*HAZARD COMMUNICATION*)**

**TERMS:** The state labor department has adopted rules requiring agricultural and other employers to provide information to their employees about the hazardous chemicals to which they are exposed on the job. Except for the additional protections summarized below, Alaska's hazard communication rules are identical to those established by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (*see entry, U.S. — Pesticides & Agricultural Chemicals — Hazard Communication*) and are applicable to all agricultural establishments.

**Data Sheets** — For each potentially hazardous "physical agent" present in a particular workplace, Alaska law requires the employer to have available an information sheet that, among other things, identifies the agent, describes the health hazards associated with it, outlines precautions or procedures for avoiding those hazards, and describes emergency or first aid procedures in the event of over-exposure. Among the physical agents most likely to pose a threat to agricultural workers are heat stress, cold stress and ultraviolet radiation.

**Access to Data Sheets** — Upon a worker's request, the employer must provide a copy of the physical agent data sheet for any such agent to which the worker may be exposed. Likewise, employers must post in the workplace a data sheet for each toxic or hazardous substance or physical agent to which an employee may be exposed there, or post a list of those substances or agents and identify a location where the data sheets can be accessed by employees during the work shift.

**Training** — At the time of their initial assignment, an employer must provide employees with information and training on the physical agents present in their work area.

**ENFORCEMENT:** *Occupational Safety and Health Section, Division of Labor Standards and Safety, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Juneau, Alaska 99811 (907-465-4855).*

**SPECIAL NOTE:** An employer may not fire, discipline or discriminate against a worker because the worker has filed a complaint or made use of any other right granted by these provisions.