

■ **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT OF 1970 (HAZARD COMMUNICATION)**

TERMS: With certain limitations, described in the special note below, agricultural employers whose workers may be exposed to hazardous chemicals on the job must establish a hazard communication program for their workers. The program must be in written form, made available to workers on request, and include the elements described in brief as follows.

Hazardous Chemical List — For each individual work area or for the farm or other establishment as a whole, employers must compile a list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present.

Labeling of Containers — In general, employers are required to ensure that each container of hazardous chemicals in the workplace (including pesticides) is properly labeled with identifying information and hazard warnings. Pesticide products that are subject to the labeling requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency do not require workplace labeling or hazard warnings, but agricultural employers must see that the existing product labels remain intact and readable.

Safety Data Sheets — For each pesticide or other hazardous chemical at the workplace, employers must obtain a safety data sheet from the product's manufacturer or distributor, and keep the data sheet at a location that is readily accessible to their employees. A safety data sheet is a written document that contains certain safety-related information, including, among other things, (1) the product name, (2) its hazard classification, (3) the chemical and common names of each ingredient, (4) precautions for safe handling and storage, (5) recommended exposure limits, and (6) symptoms of over-exposure and recommended treatment.

Employee Information — Employers are legally responsible for informing workers, at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area, of (1) the hazard communication requirements, (2) the operations in their work area where hazardous chemicals are present, and (3) the location of the hazardous chemical list and safety data sheets described above.

Employee Training — Employers must provide related training to each new employee, and to each employee affected by a new hazardous chemical at the workplace. At a minimum, training must include (1) methods for detecting the presence of a hazardous chemical on the job, (2) the physical and health hazards of each hazardous substance the worker may be exposed to, (3) measures the worker can take to protect against those hazards, and (4) an explanation of labeling, the safety data sheets, and other aspects of the employer's hazard communication program.

ENFORCEMENT: *Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210 (202-693-1999; toll-free 800-321-6742).*

Under a written plan approved by OSHA, each of the following states is authorized to enforce its own standards covering hazard communication in agricultural workplaces, identical or very similar to those described above:

Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

In these states, OSHA generally does not play a part in enforcing the hazard communication provisions. For the name of the state agency responsible for compliance, see the hazard communication summary under the heading "*Pesticides and Agricultural Chemicals*" for the particular state of interest.

SPECIAL NOTE: In accordance with Congressional restrictions on the use of federal funds for administration of this law, OSHA is prohibited in most cases from conducting inspections or otherwise enforcing these standards on any farm which employs fewer than 11 workers in any year. However, agricultural employers who operate a temporary labor camp are subject to the law without regard to the number of workers employed.