Your Right to Know

Tennessee law and University policy assure employees the right to know about the hazardous chemicals in their work place. If you need additional information, you may utilize any of the following sources:

- The University Occupational Safety and Health Program
- The Tennessee Hazardous Chemical Right to Know Poster in your building
- Your departmental Hazardous Chemical Right-to-Know Notebook
- Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) **memphis.edu/ehs**, 901.678.5700

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS®
Office of Environmental Health and Safety

Office of Environmental Health & Safety
216 Browning Hall
Memphis, Tennessee 38152-3340

Recognizing Hazardous Chemicals

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS®

What is a Hazardous Chemical?

A hazardous chemical is one that exhibits a physical or health hazard.

Physical Hazards

A chemical exhibits a physical hazard when it is classified as:

- Explosive
- Flammable
- Gas under pressure
- Corrosive to metals
- Organic peroxide
- Pyrophoric
- Self-heating
- Self-reactive
- Oxidizer
- Emits flammable gases on contact with water

Health Hazards

A chemical exhibits a health hazard when it acts on specific target organs or is classified as:

- Carcinogenic
- Acutely toxic
- Mutagenic
- Corrosive to skin
- Reproductive toxin
- Sensitizer
- Irritant
- Toxic if aspirated
- Asphyxiant

Read the label and the SDS before using any potentially hazardous chemical

Determining the Hazards

You do not have to be an expert to determine if a chemical is hazardous; it's as simple as reading the label and the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

Warning Labels

A hazardous chemical label must include a signal word, **DANGER** or **WARNING**, indicating the severity of the hazards. The label must also contain pictograms representing hazards, list the physical and/or health hazards of the chemical, and provide information on how to protect yourself and others from those hazards.

Employees are forbidden by law and University policy to remove or deface labels on hazardous material containers that are not empty.

Transferring a hazardous chemical out of the original container for other than your immediate use requires labeling the new container with the material name (in English) and the appropriate hazard warnings.

Safety Data Sheets

In addition to labels, manufacturers or distributors are required to provide you with an SDS that contains detailed information on the identity of the material, its hazards, and how to protect yourself and others from those hazards. Never use a hazardous chemical without thoroughly reading and understanding the SDS. SDSs on file with Environmental Health and Safety are maintained on the EH&S web site.

Information and Training

Your department is responsible for providing you with information and training on the hazardous chemicals to which you are exposed under normal operating conditions or in a foreseeable emergency. This responsibility includes maintaining an up-to-date inventory of hazardous chemicals in your work area and making SDSs readily available to you during all work shifts.

The most dangerous chemical is one without a label. Never accept an unlabeled container.