

# HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

**Environmental and Occupational Safety  
Valdosta State University  
Valdosta, Georgia**

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**VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

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## **PURPOSE**

This written Hazard Communication Program is established for Valdosta State University to comply with the Georgia Public Employees Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right To Know Act of 1988 as amended, and Georgia Department of Labor Chapter 300-3-19 Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right To Know Rules. This Program is maintained by the Office of Environmental and Occupational Safety (EOS) and is available to all employees, the Right-to-Know Coordinator for the University System of Georgia, and the Georgia Department of Labor.

## **POLICY**

All employees of Valdosta State University shall be informed about the hazards of chemicals to which they may be exposed in the workplace. This information will be provided to employees in the form of employee training, container labels, safety data sheets and other appropriate forms of warning. All work areas of Valdosta State University are included within this plan. Valdosta State University has designated Michael Fontaine as the Right to Know Coordinator.

## **RIGHT TO KNOW COORDINATOR**

The Valdosta State University Right to Know Coordinator is Michael Fontaine, Occupational Safety Coordinator. His phone number is 293-6171. The responsibilities of the Right to Know Coordinator are to:

1. Act as liaison between Valdosta State University and the University System of Georgia on hazardous chemicals issues.
2. Determine applicability of these rules to individual workplaces and work areas of the University using on-site inspections, review of written records and industrial hygiene studies.
3. Make arrangements for and/or provide appropriate and adequate training to all employees of Valdosta State University.
4. Provide a workplace-specific hazard communication program for each workplace. This workplace-specific program will include a list of hazardous chemicals used, stored, or manufactured in that particular workplace, and will be available to all employees in the workplace.
5. Disseminate updated information so that all employees of Valdosta State University will have access to current Safety Data Sheets for chemicals in their workplace which are included on the Georgia Right to Know Hazardous Chemicals List.
6. Ensure that employees are aware of and trained in the uses and hazards associated with the specific chemicals in their work area.
7. Ensure that employee training on and notification of the use of hazardous chemicals in the workplace are documented in each employee's personnel file.
8. Ensure that each department provides employees with personal protective equipment appropriate to each work environment and adequate training in the use and maintenance of this equipment.
9. Assemble chemical inventory of Valdosta State University in December and June of each year.

## **PROCUREMENT OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS**

It is the responsibility of the person approving the purchase of any chemical or product to determine whether it is a hazardous chemical under the law.

EOS is notified of any purchase of a hazardous chemical using eProcurement processes under the Procurement office. Any person procuring a hazardous chemical by other means **MUST** forward copy of the purchase record to the Valdosta State University Right to Know Coordinator, or otherwise communicate in writing that the procurement did occur. Notification by e-mail is acceptable.

## **SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDSs)**

A Safety Data Sheet or SDS (formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheet or MSDS) must be provided with the first shipment of any chemical product received by Valdosta State University. Any person procuring a hazardous chemical **MUST** send a copy of the SDS to the Right to Know Coordinator (Michael Fontaine, Occupational Safety Coordinator) and to the department head as soon as it is received. If the SDS is not received with the first shipment of any chemical entering the facility, the person who procured the chemical should contact the shipper and request that the SDS be sent.

SDSs are maintained in two locations. A central file of SDSs for all hazardous chemicals on campus is maintained in the EOS office and is available to employees upon request. Department heads and/or supervisors are responsible for maintaining SDSs of the hazardous chemicals found in their work areas for employee review during each work shift. The SDSs in these files are revised or replaced as new or updated SDSs are received.

The University System of Georgia Right To Know Coordinator shall review incoming SDSs for new and significant health and safety information, and will see that such new information is passed on to the Valdosta State University Right to Know Coordinator not later than 30 days after receipt.

## **CONTAINER LABELING**

All containers received for use will be clearly labeled. The person ordering a chemical or a product containing a hazardous chemical is responsible for inspecting the container upon receipt. Label information will contain:

1. The contents.
2. The appropriate hazard warnings.
3. The name and address of the manufacturer.

Labels shall be legible, in English, and prominently displayed on all containers of hazardous chemicals. Labels shall not be defaced. If a label becomes unreadable, loose, defaced or is missing, employees shall contact their supervisor immediately to arrange for placement of a new label on the container.

Secondary Containers: The work shift supervisor in each section should ensure that all secondary containers are labeled with either an extra copy of the original manufacturer's label or with a label containing:

1. The identity of the contents **AND**

2. A properly completed NFPA or HMIS hazard warning label.

If a secondary container is intended for short-term use only (one work shift or less), it shall be labeled with the name of the contents and date of filling at a minimum. Vials and test tubes may have hazard labels affixed to the rack or container in which they are held rather than on each vial or test tube, so long as every vial or test tube in the rack or container presents the same hazard.

**Unlabeled Containers:** If an employee finds a container in the workplace that is unlabeled or carries a defaced label and believes it contains a hazardous chemical, the employee should immediately notify a supervisor. If the supervisor is unable to identify the container contents, the supervisor should call the Right to Know Coordinator for assistance.

## EMPLOYEE TRAINING

**Frequency of Training:** Each employee shall be provided the required Right to Know training at the time of initial assignment to a workplace. Additionally, each employee that is exposed to hazardous chemicals in the workplace shall be provided with annual re-training regarding the hazards of the chemicals to which the employee is exposed. An employee shall not be exposed to a hazardous chemical until he or she has been trained in its hazards.

**Content of Training:** Training programs shall be tailored to the specific nature of each individual workplace and the education level of the employees. At a minimum, the information provided to employees must include the following:

1. The requirements of the Georgia Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right to Know Act
2. Identification of specific work areas in the workplace where hazardous chemicals are handled and/or produced
3. The location and content of the University's Hazard Communication Program
4. The purpose of and information contained in Safety Data Sheets
5. Labeling system (including provisions of the Globally Harmonized System) used at the workplace and how to respond to an unlabeled container
6. Various control measures to be used to minimize the employees' exposure to hazardous chemicals, including
  - a. Use of face shields, goggles and safety glasses
  - b. Use of appropriate gloves, aprons, protective clothing and foot coverings
  - c. Use of exhaust ventilation equipment
  - d. Work practices that reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals
7. Right of the employee's physician to receive hazardous chemical information
8. Methods of detecting employee exposure, such as air sampling, biological monitoring, visual detection, odor identification, warning properties of the hazardous chemical used and other standard industrial hygiene techniques
9. Emergency procedures such as spill response and first aid
10. Proper storage of chemicals and separation of incompatible substances
11. Hazards of improper mixing of chemicals located in the employee's work area and of exposure to chemical reaction products
12. Where additional information and training can be obtained.

**Documentation of Training:** A written record of the training must be completed and maintained in each employee's personnel file for three years after the training.

**Training for Increased Hazard:** Prior to the introduction of any new chemical hazard, significant increase of an existing hazard, or assignment to a non-routine hazardous task, the immediate supervisor of affected employees must ensure that additional, chemical-specific training is provided and recorded, including the information listed above.

**Employee Information Poster:** A poster describing employee rights under the Act shall be posted in all workplaces in a prominent manner so that it is visible to all employees on a routine basis. For those workplaces with geographically dispersed work areas, a poster shall be placed in each work area. The required poster is attached as Appendix A.

## **SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Supervisors are responsible for advising their employees of any operations occurring in their workplaces where hazardous materials are present.

Supervisors are also responsible for ensuring that all hazardous chemicals remaining on Valdosta State University property as a result of the departure of a faculty or staff member, or the vacating or reassignment of an assigned space, shall be managed in accordance with appropriate procedures. EOS is available to assist supervisors in determining proper handling of hazardous chemicals.

## **INFORMING CONTRACTORS**

Any contract with Valdosta State University which may involve hazardous chemical exposure should require the contractor to:

1. Notify the Right to Know Coordinator of any hazardous chemicals which will be used or stored at the work site by the contractor or its sub-contractors. This notification must take place at least 30 days prior to the commencement of work (however, the 30-day requirement may be waived in the event of an emergency). The workplace manager will then:
  - a. Disseminate this information to employees whose work area will be affected by the contractor's work.
  - b. Obtain from the contractor SDSs for those hazardous chemicals and maintain them readily available to University employees during the contractor's presence at the worksite.
2. Provide documentation to the workplace manager that its employees and its sub-contractors have been provided with information and training on hazardous chemicals being used by the contractor or its sub-contractors at the worksite.

The Valdosta State University contract administrator, project manager or a designee will inform contractors that a list of hazardous chemicals and precautionary measures for each work area can be obtained from the department supervisor. Access to the University's written Right to Know Program and SDSs will be provided to the contractor upon request.

## HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL LISTS

Each department that uses hazardous chemicals is responsible for keeping an up-to-date inventory of the chemicals being used. Copies of these inventories shall be forwarded to the EOS by November 30 and May 31 of each year. The Right to Know Coordinator shall supply to the University System Right to Know Coordinator in June and December of each year, a list, by name, of all hazardous chemicals or products present in the member unit's workplaces. This list shall include all chemicals labeled as flammable, explosive, combustible liquid, corrosive, reactive, oxidizer, toxic, water reactive, pyrophoric, or organic peroxide.

The Valdosta State University Right to Know Coordinator shall publish every January and July a list of those hazardous chemicals and products containing hazardous chemicals which are found at the University. Publication of this list is required as a part of this written Hazardous Chemical Protection Communication Program. The list is available in the Environmental and Occupational Safety Office, located at 1504 N. Oak Street.

## DEFINITIONS

1. **Right To Know Coordinator** means an individual who is assigned the responsibilities associated with that title in the written Hazardous Chemical Protection Communication (Right to Know) Plan, and who is assigned the responsibilities of hazardous chemical protection communication coordinator in the Chapter 300-3-19 Rules.
2. **University System Right to Know Coordinator** means the individual who is assigned the responsibilities associated with that title.
3. **Work area** means a room inside a building or structure, an outside area, or other defined space in a workplace where hazardous chemicals are produced, stored, or used and where employees are present in the course of their employment.
4. **Workplace** means an establishment or business of an employer at one geographic location at which work is performed by a state employee and which contains one or more work areas. In the case of an independent contractor or subcontractor, the workplace shall be defined as all work areas wholly owned or controlled by such independent contractor or subcontractor.

## APPENDIX A

### **Employees of the State of Georgia YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN YOUR WORKPLACE**

Under the "Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right to Know Act of 1988" you must be informed of the following:

1. The Requirements of the law;
2. Your right to receive information regarding hazardous chemicals faced on your job;
3. Your right to receive formal training and education on hazardous chemicals;
4. What a Safety Data Sheet is, and how to use it;
5. Where hazardous chemicals are used in your work area;
6. Your physician's right to receive information on the chemicals to which you may be exposed.

### **YOU CANNOT BE FIRED, DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, OR DISCIPLINED FOR EXERCISING YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW**

No pay, position, seniority, or other benefits may be lost for exercising your right to know.

You may present a written request to receive a Safety Data Sheet for any chemical used on your job.

You have the right to refuse to work with a hazardous chemical if a Safety Data Sheet in your employer's possession has not been provided to you within 5 working days after your written request, unless you are required to perform essential services.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

File a grievance through the established procedure for your agency.

If unresolved, or if no established grievance procedure exists, then file a grievance with:

Commissioner of Labor  
Georgia Department of Labor  
223 Courtland Street, NE, Suite 600  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 232-7300

RE: Right to Know Act