



Safety data sheets

Safety data sheets (SDS) provide key information about hazardous substances for people who handle, store, use, or could be exposed to them.

You must have a SDS for each hazardous substance in your workplace regardless of the quantity you hold. It must be readily accessible in hard copy or electronic form. Planning to search for an SDS online when you need it is not good enough.

WHY YOU **SHOULD** HAVE A SDS

- It tells you how the chemical should be safely used, stored, transported and disposed of.
- It gives first aid information.
- It tells you what personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed.
- It tells you what to do in an emergency – say, a fire or spill.

WHY YOU **MUST** HAVE A SDS

- Because it is a legal requirement to have one.
- Because your inventory must include a current SDS for each hazardous substance in your workplace (and you have to have an inventory).

SDS

You do not need an SDS when the hazardous substance:

- is in transit
- is a consumer product and is used at the workplace only in quantities that are consistent with household use, or
- is a consumer product in a retailer's premises, for the purpose of supply to another premises, and is not intended to be opened on the retailer's premises.

Where to get an SDS

- It should be provided by the supplier when a hazardous substance is first supplied to the workplace or, if the SDS is amended, when the substance is next supplied
- If you do not have one, or it is more than five years old, ask your supplier for a new copy.

What to do with your SDS

- Read them.
- Keep them with your inventory.
- Make sure that anybody who handles or may be exposed to the substance has access to them or a condensed version (for example, a product safety card).
- Ask your supplier if a condensed version of the SDS is available so that the key information is highlighted and easily understood.
- Make sure your workers understand the SDS, particularly those who do not like reading, may have trouble with reading, or for whom English is a second language.

SDS	THE 'MUST READ' BITS
Dangers	Hazards identification (section 2) gives you the classification for the substance and any dangers and risks from the substance.
Handling and storage	Handling and storage (section 7) tells you how and where to store the substance and any precautions you need to take when handling it. If you need to take extra precautions this is where it will tell you.
Stability and reactivity	Stability and reactivity (section 10) tells you how stable the substance is under normal and anticipated storage conditions, and when it is being handled, as well as any incompatible substances it should be stored away from.
Personal protective equipment	Exposure control/personal protection (section 8) tells you the exposure limits for the substance, any engineering controls, and the specific types of personal protective equipment that are needed to minimise the potential for illness or injury due to exposure to the substance.
First Aid	First aid measures (section 4) tells you what to do if somebody swallows, breathes or has the substance spilled on them. Read this section. Print it out big. Stick it on the wall. Show your workers and make sure they understand it. It is important.
Fire	Fire fighting measures (section 5) tells you what types of extinguishers you should use (and what you should NOT use) and what types of gases and chemicals may be produced if the substance is involved in a fire.
Spill containment, clean up and disposal	Accidental release measures (section 6) tells you what to do in the event of a spill, how to best clean it up and what to do with the spilt material. Disposal considerations (section 13) tells you how to safely dispose of the empty container and any residual product.
HSR numbers	If you look under Regulatory Information (section 15) you will find a number that begins with 'HSR'. The HSR number is the unique identifier number and you will need it when you are using the Hazardous Substances Register for creating an inventory.



For more detailed information on safety data sheets

The regulations

[Regulation 2.11, Health and Safety at Work \(Hazardous Substances\) Regulations 2017](#)

The guidance

[Safety data sheets](#)