

### Why Hazard Communication?

The purpose of a *Hazard Communication Program* is to help employees understand the potential hazards of the chemicals in use at their worksite. This education, required by the Occupational Safety & Health Act, is also called *Workers' Right To Know*.

Hazard Communication is very important, however, because it can protect employees from dangers that may be present when chemicals are being used. One very important key to a Hazard Communication Program is the Material Safety Data Sheet. These sheets tell you "everything you need to know" about a specific chemical. If you read the MSDS you will be able to determine:

- The **HEALTH HAZARDS** associated with any chemical you are using or are exposed to;
- How **FLAMMABLE** the product is, and at what temperature it may ignite;
- The **REACTIVITY** of the chemical with water or other agents;
- What **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)** is needed to work with the product.

Every employee should be able to answer, and should *remember*, the following questions:

- Where are the MSDS's kept for the chemicals I am exposed to?
- What kinds of hazards do I face when I use—or misuse—this chemical?
- Do I understand the emergency procedures to follow in the event of a spill?
- Have I inspected my personal protective equipment to be sure that it will protect me properly when and if I need to use it?

Think about some real life examples of when it would be good to know more about chemicals in the scrap yard:

- Your co-worker accidentally just sprayed a chemical in his eye. How do you find information about the chemical and what's the best way to treat it? Your ability to quickly locate the MSDS could make a difference in saving his vision.
- A metal fire starts in the yard. If you have not been trained on how to properly extinguish it, you may think water is your best bet. Hazard Communication training will cover the best way to handle certain materials in emergency situations.

Compared to other industries, the amount of chemicals we use in the scrap industry is small. However, knowing about the chemicals we do have is the best way to stay safe.

This e-mail was produced by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. For more information, visit us on the Web at [www.ISRI.org](http://www.ISRI.org)  
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