

"For safety's sake—do something."

What's Possibly Exposing You

SSOE, like most workplaces, takes pride in providing a **safe place to work** for all of its employees. A safe workplace includes designing, implementing, and maintaining safe facilities, accomplished by engineering and administrative controls. This includes job sites that our employees visit and work, and in our offices. Common things that we come in contact with could be hazardous to our employees and others. Safety hazards are unsafe working conditions that can cause injury, illness, and even possibly death. Some examples are falls, electrocutions, housekeeping issues, and even chemical exposures.

Chemical hazards include compounds or substances that can cause illness or injury, due to immediate or long-term exposure, through injection, absorption, inhalation, or ingestion. According to OSHA, all employers, with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces, must have labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for their exposed workers, and train them to use the chemicals appropriately. Hazardous is defined as a situation involving or exposing a person to risk or harm. Training is required to educate the worker about safe storage, use, handling, and disposal. The training for employees must also include information on the hazards of the chemicals in their personal work area and the measures to be used to protect themselves.

Some commonly found workplace chemical hazards include:

- Hand soaps, lotions, hand sanitizers
- Glues
- Paint
- Air fresheners
- Fragrances and dyes in products
- Pesticides
- Cleaning products
- Petroleum products
- Acids
- Latex gloves
- Caustic substances
- Inks and toners

Exposures to chemicals can have adverse effects on people and be completely different from one person to the next. Some exposures to chemicals cause allergic reactions, asthma attacks, rashes, dizziness, loss of consciousness, burns, and even death. Allergic reactions are common and can be from chemical exposure, but also from food allergies through inhalation or ingestion. Employees must be made aware of the symptoms and signs of overexposure, and should always be vigilant if they know they have a sensitivity to certain things. The employer, and even co-workers, should be informed of sensitivities to chemicals or food in order to properly protect employees.

Employers should review all SDSs of chemicals and determine if they are in line with regulatory agencies. Any employee bringing in chemicals or products to the office or worksite is required to provide copies of the SDSs for the products to ensure compliance. If any of the products are for personal use, like at your desk, an SDS would not be required, but the employer still should know about it.

At SSOE, each office maintains a listing of the chemicals or product SDSs for those chemicals they have. The list, by the office, can be found on the Corporate Safety Intranet site.



For Safety's Sake Do Something

Always be aware of possible exposures in the workplace. Know what the SDS requires for substances that you may be exposed to or around.