

6.6 Hazardous Materials and Worker Safety Checklist

Hazardous materials are often used as ingredients in processes or as materials in manufacturing. They may be used in a wide range of items, from cleaning agents to product constituents. Hazardous materials are chemicals that are reactive, corrosive, ignitable, or toxic.

Reactive means that the material, sodium or potassium metal for example, undergoes a violent reaction with water. Corrosive implies a material has a strong acid property such as car battery acid, or a strong alkaline or base property such as lye used in drain cleaners. Strong acids and bases can both cause strong tissue damage when in direct contact with the skin. Ignitable materials such as gasoline, and many cleaning or painting solvents catch fire very easily. A material with a flash point of less than 140° Fahrenheit. Toxic materials can be poisonous, noxious, or venomous and may consist of fumes, liquids, or solids. Examples include methyl alcohol vapors, liquid pesticides, mercury, and lead.

The following questions provide a brief look at some of the issues that a small business may face. Any answers corresponding to those marked with an asterisk indicate that additional assistance for the business may be needed.

- 1) Does the business maintain a complete file of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous materials on site, and are the MSDS sheets available at a convenient location for employees?

Yes _____ No _____ * Don't Know _____ *

- 2) Has an inventory been conducted and maintained for all hazardous materials in use or produced on site?

Yes _____ No _____ *

- 3) Does your business have or need a hazardous Communication Standards Program?

Yes _____ No _____ * Don't Know _____ *

- 4) Does the business maintain effective education and training programs on safety and chemicals hazards, including adequate follow up on enforcement of rules?

Yes _____ No _____ *

- 5) Do employees know proper procedures for handling and managing hazardous materials, including procedures for spill response and emergency cleanup ?

Yes _____ No _____ *

6) Are containers with hazardous materials labeled with proper warnings, and are containers kept closed or secured in proper storage facilities?

Yes _____ No _____ *

7) Does the storage of hazardous chemicals in the business comply with National Fire Protection and local ordinances?

Yes _____ No _____ * Don't Know _____ *

8) Are hazardous materials ordered on an as needed basis rather than stockpiling larger quantities?

Yes _____ No _____ *