

MSDS Anatomy

An MSDS contains just about everything a worker, building occupant or emergency personnel would ever need to know about a substance, from its melting point to its health effects. Although formats vary, MSDSs are typically broken into sections that contain related safety information. Some examples of data that can be found on an MSDS include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical name, trade names, list of chemicals if mixture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product composition, a listing of active and inactive ingredients and exposure limits for those chemicals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health hazards, including signs and symptoms of overexposure, medical conditions aggravated by exposure, routes of entry, carcinogenicity indicators and relevant first-aid measures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire-fighting procedures, including explosion hazards, flash point, and suggested extinguishing media.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper handling and storage of the substance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal protective equipment to be worn when using the product.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability and reactivity data, such as materials to avoid mixing with it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each MSDS must include emergency phone numbers, either directly to the manufacturer or to an outside company with 24-hour access.

These sections can be in any order and can appear differently from other MSDS sheets. It is advised that employees read through the MSDS sheet on a new chemical to their worksite before working with that chemical.