

CAYUGA COUNTY POLICY MANUAL
Section 17

Subject: Employee Right to Know
Effective Date: 5/25/10; Res. 255-10
Supersedes Policy of: 10/27/09

Policy Title: Right to Know/Hazard Communication Standard

Objective:

I. The “Right to Know” Act (*New York State, 1980*) was passed with an understanding that workers in New York State and their families may be in danger because of exposures to toxic substances at the work site. Accordingly, the Act maintains that workers have an inherent right to know all of the health hazards associated with toxic substances for two reasons:

1. Employees have a right to make an informed decision about the possible costs of employment to health and life;
2. Employees can observe symptoms of toxicity in themselves and understand the relationship between the symptoms and exposure, and can, therefore, evaluate the need for any corrective action.

Policy:

1. Training of all employees is required annually.
2. Awareness signs are to be posted in all buildings.
3. Records of employee attendance must be kept for forty years.
4. A **Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)** or equivalent must be made available to the employee requesting it within 72 hours.
5. The Clerk of the Legislature or his/her designee will maintain a list of all hazardous chemicals used in the facility, and update the list as necessary.

II. Hazard Communication Standard (*Hazcom, Federally Mandated in 1986*)

Objective: The purpose of this standard is to ensure that the hazards of all chemicals produced or imported by chemical manufacturers or importers are evaluated, and that information concerning their hazards is transmitted to affected employers and employees. This transmittal of information is to be accomplished by means of comprehensive hazard communications programs, which are to include container labeling, Material Safety Data Sheets and employee training.

Policy:

1. All manufacturing and importers of chemical products must prepare an MSDS applicable to each product which they manufacture or import. This Standard applies to any chemical which is known to be present in the workplace in such a

manner that employees may be exposed to it under normal conditions or in a foreseeable emergency.

2. The manufacturer is responsible for determining and documenting any potential hazards.
3. Each employer has a written plan in the main office (Clerk of the Legislature Office), which is available to all employees.
4. Chemical products should be stored only in the manufacturers labeled containers unless the entire quantity is to be used during a single work shift.
5. HAZCOM requires training when employees are hired or when a new substance is introduced into the workplace. The Employer provides annual training for all employees in order to comply with both Right To Know and HAZCOM.
6. Material Safety Data Sheets contain complete information regarding each chemical product. HAZCOM is more stringent than Right To Know in that these documents are required to be readily accessible to employees in the work area.

III. Public Employee Safety and Health Act (*PESH, New York State, Amended, 1985*):

This act enables the State Department of Labor to adopt and enforce OSHA's Health and Safety Standards as they apply to public employees.

(Note: Policy shall be reviewed by the County Administrator or his/her designee along with the Risk Management Committee and distributed to all County Departments when revisions are adopted by the Legislature.)