Your Right to Know

Tennessee law and University policy assure employees the right to know about the hazardous materials in their workplace. If you need additional information, you may utilize any of the following sources:

- Your supervisor
- The University Occupational Safety and Health Program
- The Tennessee Hazardous Chemical Right to Know Poster in your building
- Your departmental Hazardous Chemical Right-to-Know Notebook
- Environmental Health & Safety (678-4672, 678-2740, or 678-2044)
- The EH&S web page: http://ehs.memphis.edu
What is a Hazardous Chemical?

A hazardous chemical is one which exhibits a physical or health hazard.

Physical Hazards

A chemical exhibits a physical hazard when it is classified as

- Combustible liquid
- Compressed gas
- Explosive
- Flammable aerosol, gas, liquid, or solid
- Organic peroxide
- Oxidizer
- Pyrophoric
- Unstable (reactive)
- Water reactive

Health Hazards

A chemical exhibits a health hazard when it acts on specific target organs or is classified as

- Carcinogenic
- Highly toxic
- Toxic
- Corrosive
- Reproductive toxin
- Sensitizer
- Irritant

Determining the Hazards

You do not have to be an expert to determine if a chemical is hazardous; it’s as simple as reading the label and the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

Material Safety Data Sheets

In addition to labels, manufacturers or distributors are required to provide you with an MSDS that contains detailed information on the identity of the material, its hazards, and how to protect yourself and others from those hazards. Never use a hazardous chemical without thoroughly reading and understanding the MSDS.

Warning Labels

A signal word (DANGER, WARNING, or CAUTION) may be printed on the label of a hazardous chemical. In addition, the label must list the physical and/or health hazards of the chemical and provide information on how to protect yourself and others from the hazards.

Information and Training

Your department is responsible for providing you with information and training on the hazardous chemicals to which you are exposed under normal operating conditions or in a foreseeable emergency. This responsibility includes maintaining an up-to-date inventory of hazardous chemicals in your work area and making MSDSs readily available to you during all work shifts.