State hazard communication standards require employers to provide employees with information concerning the hazards associated with the chemicals in their workplace. Among other things, these standards require a written hazard communication program, container labels, material safety data sheets, formal safety training.

This document and others in the EHS/RMS Section of the Administrative Services Manual serve as a portion of the required written hazard communication program for the university and are often referred to as “company policy.” The pertinent EHS/RMS sections should be made available to employees upon request. However, each department should develop their own plans based upon their unique occupational chemical and physical agent hazards.

Individual department procedures and instructions form the remaining part of the university program. Procedures and instructions should be documented, retained by the department, and available to employees.

It is strongly recommended that departments make use of the “fill in the blanks” template provided by OSHA when developing their plans.

Chemical manufacturers, importers, or distributors are required to label each container of hazardous chemicals. Departments must verify the labeling to ensure that no container of hazardous chemicals is released for use unless it is properly labeled in conformance with NFPA standard 704M (see example in EHS Appendix 1).

NFPA 704M is a symbol system that was designed to identify the fire hazards of materials. It is for use on chemical containers, chemical processing equipment, storage and warehousing rooms, and laboratory entrances. It tells a fire fighter what he must do to protect himself from injury while fighting a fire in the area and provides valuable information to employees involved in spill clean-up activity. The "NFPA diamond" visually presents information on health, flammability, and self-reactivity hazards, as well as special information associated with the hazards.
Department heads or their designees responsible for:

- Verifying that all containers of hazardous substances in the workplace are labeled, tagged, or marked with the identity of the hazardous chemical, the appropriate hazard warnings, and the name and address of the manufacturer, importer, or distributor.

- Instructing employees to not remove or deface container labels.

- Obtaining, from the source, labels or label information for unlabeled or improperly labeled containers.

- Instructing employees on the importance of labeling secondary or portable receptacles into which they have poured hazardous substances. If the portable container is for immediate use, labeling is not required.

**MSDS/PADS**

Chemical manufacturers are required to send a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) with the initial shipment of a chemical. Physical Agent Data Sheet (PADS) are provided by the Alaska Department of Labor and can be found in EHS/RMS Appendix 19. These documents contain detailed information about the physical and chemical properties of the substance, the physical and health hazards, safe handling precautions, spill clean-up procedures, and emergency and first aid procedures. A more detailed explanation of MSDSs is found in EHS/RMS Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Interpretation, Appendix 8. Even with detailed explanations, MSDSs can sometimes be confusing, alarming, and generally describe “worse-case” scenarios. In case such as those, please contact EHS/RMS (786-1351 or ayssg@uaa.alaska.edu) and an evaluation and explanation will be provided in context.

The MSDS and PADS must be retained by departments and must be accessible and available to all employees for review during each work shift. Alternately, MSDSs can be received and stored electronically as
long as all effected employees have convenient electronic access. Often
times, current MSDSs can be obtained at manufacturers’ web sites. In
addition, two excellent MSDS archive sites can be found at the
University of Vermont SIRI site (http://hazard.com/) and Cornell
University’s MSDS search site (http://msds.pdc.cornell.edu/msdssrch.asp). Other listings are available in
EHS/RMS Appendix 20, Material Safety Data Sheets.

Physical Agent Data Sheets (PADS) are available at
http://www.labor.state.ak.us/lss/pads.htm or at EHS/RMS Appendix 19,
Physical Agent Data Sheets. Currently there are eight physical agents
listed:

- Cold Stress
- Hand-Arm Vibration
- Heat Stress
- Ionizing Radiation
- Lasers
- Noise
- Radio Frequency/Microwave Radiation
- Ultraviolet Radiation

If a MSDS or PADS for a material is not received, departments should
restrict the use of the material or inform the employees of the hazard, and
request immediate assistance in obtaining the document from EHS/RMS
(786-1351 or ayssg@uaa.alaska.edu) or the manufacturer of the product.

State law requires employers to remove employees from exposure to a
substance or physical agent if an MSDS cannot be obtained and provided
to employees within 15 calendar days of employee request.

Employee Training and Information
Personnel will provide all new employees with the following general
hazard communication training and information during employee
orientation.
An overview of the Right to Know Law and university hazard communication policies and procedures or other applicable regulations.

Instructions on reading labels and MSDS to obtain hazard information.

Department heads, supervisors, and designated safety officers are responsible for providing the following training and information to employees that are exposed to specific hazards.

Location of MSDS and availability of the written hazard program.

A listing of the hazardous substances present in their workplace including the location of the substances and the processes in which they are involved.

Physical and health effects of the hazardous chemicals and hazardous physical agents.

Methods and observation techniques used to determine the presence or release of hazardous chemicals in the work area.

How to lessen or prevent exposure to these hazards through use of safe work practices and personal protective equipment.

Steps taken to lessen or prevent exposure to to hazards.

Safety procedures to follow for spills or emergency exposures.

Instruction whenever a new hazard is introduced in the workplace.

Procedures to follow for waste disposal.
Training should be documented by keeping records of when training sessions were held, who attended, and the contents of the training. Assistance and advice on training may be obtained from EHS/RMS (786-1351 or ayssg@uaa.alaska.edu). EHS/RMS maintains or has access to a substantial amount of training resources (videos, literature, reference volumes). In addition, EHS/RMS can provide special workshops that can be customized to meet specific needs.

Non-Routine Tasks

Prior to starting work on a non-routine project involving hazardous substances, each affected employee will be given information by their supervisor about hazards to which they may be exposed. This information will include:

- Identification of the specific substance hazards.
- Protective and safety practices which must be followed.
- Measures the university has taken to lessen the hazards including ventilation, respirators, presences of other employees, and emergency procedures.

Required Posting

A Right-to-Know Poster found in EHS/RMS Appendix 18 is required to be posted on employee bulletin boards at UAA. In addition, the name, location, contact numbers, etc. for the person coordinating safety concerns in your department or area should be printed on the poster, for example:

Trig Trigiano, Safety Officer
University Lake Building, Room 100F
UAA Facilities & Campus Services
3890 University Lake Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: 907-786-1351
Fax: 907-786-1391
E-mail: anglt@uaa.alaska.edu
The location of the area or operation’s Material Safety Data Sheet file electronic address of the files should also be placed on the poster.

The poster found in EHS/RMS Appendix 18A or Appendix 18B is easily copied and pasted into other documents for posting and distribution. Hard copies can be obtained from EHS/RMS (786-1351 or ayssg@uaa.alaska.edu) upon request.