



Irving Materials, Inc.

Safety Topics

Volume 10, Issue 007

October 2007

- Words of Wisdom -

The best thing to do behind a friends back is pat it!

For What It Is Worth!!

Trouble in the Theater

A man was sprawled across three entire seats in a theater. When the usher came by and noticed this, he whispered to the man, "Sorry sir, but you're only allowed one seat."

The man groaned but didn't budge. The usher became impatient.

"Sir," the usher said, "if you don't get up from there, I'm going to have to call the manager."

Again, the man just groaned, which infuriated the usher who turned and marched briskly back up the aisle in search of his manager. In a few moments, both the usher and the manager returned and stood over the man. Together the two of them tried repeatedly to move him, but with no success. Finally, they summoned the police. The cop surveyed the situation briefly.

"All right, buddy. What's your name?"

"Sam," the man moaned.

"Where ya from, Sam?" the cop asked.

"The balcony."

A REVIEW OF THE HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD

I haven't talked about HAZCom recently!

The purpose of a *Hazard Communication Program* is to help employees understand the potential hazards of the chemicals in use at their worksite. Employers are required to provide instruction on this important topic that is also called *Workers' Right To Know*. Failure to meet all the requirements of the law is one of OSHA's most frequently cited violation. One of the reasons for this; many employers, supervisors and workers think chemicals are just too complex to explain and to understand, or that the chemicals we use are not that dangerous. As a result, there is a temptation to avoid the subject.

Hazard Communication is very important, however, because it can protect employees from dangers that may be present when chemicals are being used. One very important key to a Hazard Communication Program is the Material Safety Data Sheet. These sheets tell you "everything you need to know" about a specific chemical. If you read the MSDS you will be able to determine:

- The **HEALTH HAZARDS** associated with any chemical you are using or are exposed to;
- How **FLAMMABLE** the product is, and at what temperature it may ignite;
- The **REACTIVITY** of the chemical with water or other agents-will it explode, etc.?
- What **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)** is needed to work with the product.

Every employee should be able to answer, and should *remember*, the following questions:

- Where are the MSDS's kept for the chemicals I am exposed to?
- What kinds of hazards do I face when I use-or misuse--this chemical?
- Do I understand the emergency procedures to follow in the event of a spill?
- Have I inspected my personal protective equipment to be sure that it will protect me properly when and if I need to use it?

A convenient tool for reviewing the hazards and control of chemicals in your operation is a review of the label. Critical information, in short form, is contained on the label and most people find it more "user friendly" than the full Material Safety Data Sheet. The complete MSDS can be reviewed when more specific details are needed, and should always be available.

Chemistry is a complex subject, and it's hard to understand everything about the dozens-sometimes hundreds-of chemicals being used at work. Maybe the best way to accomplish this is to recall the question, "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer is, "One bite at a time!"

If one or two MSDS's are reviewed at regular safety meetings everyone will soon better understand the chemicals they work with, and know how to protect themselves from injury or illness.

As an aid to this month's Safety Topic, grab the MSDS binder and take a look at a few of the chemicals that you work with.



imi
Irving Materials, Inc.

