Reading a Safety Data Sheet (SDS)

The typical SDS is broke down into 8 sections but some versions may have more or less than 8 sections. The following sample blank SDS will be used to explain the information contained in each section and how to understand and use the information contained in the section.

Some SDS's may be different, so in reading other SDS's please pay attention to the title of the section.

- **SECTION I:** Lists the Name, Address and Telephone Number of the Manufacturer that makes the products. (Remember the SDS's contained in the manual may not have the same or the actual supplier or the manufacturer of the products on your project but the information on the rest of the sheet will pertain to the chemical listed on the sheet and found on the project.)

- **SECTION II:** Lists the Chemical Name, the Common Name or the chemical and what hazardous ingredients are contained in the chemical. This section also lists the safe allowable worker exposure limits to each substance in the chemical.

- **SECTION III:** Lists the physical and chemical characteristics of the chemical. This section also lists the chemical's normal appearance and color. It tells you if the chemical will dissolve in water, if it will sink or float. It lists the boiling point and melting point temperatures at which the chemical can change from a liquid to a gas and it also identifies the vapor pressure, vapor density and the rate at which the chemical will evaporate.

- **SECTION IV:** Lists the flash point and information regarding the fire extinguishing methods to be used should a fire result. The flash point is the minimum temperature where you have to start worrying about flammable and explosive vapors. (As a general rule, you should never smoke or have an open flame around any chemical unless the flame is necessary for doing the work.)

- **SECTION V:** Lists the reactivity data. It tells what can happen if the chemical is combined with other chemicals, water or air and it also tells if the chemical is stable and what things will change the stability of the chemical. Safe storage procedures of the chemical are also listed.

- **SECTION VI:** Lists the Health Hazards associated with the improper use of the chemical. It tells you how the chemical can enter your body. This section tells you how to tell if you have been overexposed to this chemical and the emergency and first aid procedures to follow if you are overexposed. Medical conditions, which you have, that could be aggravated by the chemical will also be listed in this section.

- **SECTION VII:** Lists the precautions to be used for safe use and handling of the chemical. It explains what to do if there's a spill, leak or accidental release of the chemical. It lists the proper disposal methods and other precautions to be taken in safely handling the chemical.

- **SECTION VIII:** Lists the control methods for protecting yourself from overexposure and dangers of the chemical. It lists if respiratory protection is required, gloves, eye protection and protective clothing is necessary. It will also tell you about ventilation and pressure hygiene, which will help lower your chances of overexposure to a minimum. (Safety equipment guidelines are also listed in the safety manual under personal protective equipment. If you have questions about equipment, ask your supervisor before using the equipment and chemical.)

OTHER SECTIONS OF SDS'S:

Some manufacturers use different forms and may have sections called: Special Precautions, Spill or Leak Procedures, Toxicology Information, Labeling Information, and Transportation.

Since there will be some variation in manufacturer's SDS please carefully check the SDS which is shipped to the worksite with the product and before you work with any particular substance. Product labels will provide an excellent source of substance information and may be used to inform you of the information about a product in the absence of an official SDS.

PRODUCT LABELING

The jobsite foremen, supervisors and all employees shall ensure that all chemicals, fuels and hazardous substances, which they are working with at the jobsite or the shop, are properly labeled.

Product labels must contain the following minimum information:

A. Identity of the chemical or substance.
B. Appropriate hazard warnings-precautions for safe use and handling.
C. Name, Address and Phone Number of the manufacturer, importer or responsible party.
D. Emergency First Aid Procedures.

The employees shall refer to the corresponding SDS to assist in verifying label information.

All chemicals and hazardous substances must be labeled regardless of container size and shall not be used if the label is missing or illegible. Containers without labels shall be immediately removed from the work site and you must immediately notify your supervisor or foreman regarding this lack of labeling.

It is also our policy that transferred chemicals from a labeled container to a portable or secondary shall be intended only for your immediate use. Only transfer the amount that is necessary for one shift use and no labels will be required on the portable or secondary container.

Portable and secondary containers that may be used inadvertently beyond the immediate, must be labeled with the appropriate manufacturer's label. This also applies to portable or secondary containers that may contain mixed chemicals. These containers will be labeled with each manufacturer's label of all the chemicals involved in the mixture. Additional labels can be obtained from the product manufacturer or supplier.
Labels, which do not pertain to the chemical in the secondary or portable container, must be removed or covered.