



Hazard Communication Policy

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1. Purpose

Buncombe County Government (County) seeks to maintain a safe and secure work environment for employees and visitors. Buncombe County Government expects adherence to established occupational safety and health standards. Including Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 1910.1200 Hazard Communications standard. Buncombe County establishes this policy and implementation of its components, to ensure that employees exposed to known chemical substance in the workplace are provided information about the hazards and serves to strengthen the County's commitment to a safe work environment.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all Buncombe County departments and employees unless there is a conflict with GS 153A-103 related to hiring, discharging, and supervising employees. Such exclusion is noted at the end of this policy. Otherwise, departments may adopt and enforce policies that are more restrictive than County Policy.

3. Policy

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1.1. Directors/Managers

3.1.1.1. Work with the Safety Officer in coordinating all program elements associated with the Buncombe County Hazard Communication Policy.

3.1.1.2. Ensure that affected departmental employees participate in the Hazard Communication training program per County policy

3.1.1.3. Stay informed of current laws relative to Hazard Communication

3.1.1.4. Immediately notify the Safety Officer and Risk Management and appropriate local, state, and federal officials of significant chemical spills or leaks

(Appendix D for Emergency Contact Information)

3.1.1.5. Monitor departmental Hazard Communication Program activity.

3.1.2. Supervisors

3.1.2.1. Demonstrate methods of working safely and insist employees follow safety procedures

3.1.2.2. Ensure employees have been informed and properly trained on any special or non-routine tasks that may involve chemical handling prior to assignment of the task

- 3.1.2.3. Review appropriate personal protective equipment and standard operating practices (SOPs) with employees prior to assigning task(s) of handling hazardous chemicals
- 3.1.2.4. Investigate any complaints of unsafe handling of chemicals and take corrective action
- 3.1.2.5. Ensure that employees have unrestricted access to safety data sheets and relevant Hazard Communication information during the work shift
- 3.1.2.6. Employees:
- 3.1.2.7. Attend scheduled Hazard Communication training as required per County policy
- 3.1.2.8. Learn to use available information on hazardous chemicals in the workplace which includes knowing the location of safety data sheets and how to read and interpret the information
- 3.1.2.9. Practice safe work habits and use personal protective equipment (PPE). If you don't have the appropriate PPE, ask your supervisor for the equipment
- 3.1.2.10. Review chemical labels for procedures and hazards before using any hazardous substances
- 3.1.2.11. Report any unlabeled or defaced labels on hazardous chemical containers
- 3.1.2.12. Report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor and/or the Safety Officer.
- 3.1.3. Safety Officer or designee
 - 3.1.3.1. Develop and update County wide policy
 - 3.1.3.2. Coordinate and/or conduct initial and annual County wide training sessions
 - 3.1.3.3. Aid managers and supervisors as necessary on any matter concerning this safety policy
 - 3.1.3.4. Investigate complaints or incidents of employee exposure
 - 3.1.3.5. Oversee compilation of County wide chemical inventory and submit reports to police, fire and/or other first responders as warranted
 - 3.1.3.6. Make recommendations regarding unsafe conditions to appropriate staff
 - 3.1.3.7. Monitor overall County wide program effectiveness
 - 3.1.3.8. Coordinate all departmental elements associated with the Hazard Communication Policy
 - 3.1.3.9. Ensure that a departmental chemical inventory list is established and updated yearly
 - 3.1.3.10. Maintain records of departmental employee training and re-training on hazard communication
- 3.1.4. Employees
 - 3.1.4.1. Collaborate with Safety Officers on Hazard Communication issues or questions
 - 3.1.4.2. Report any unsafe conditions to supervisors, managers.
- 3.1.5. Purchases
 - 3.1.5.1. New chemical product purchases shall result in a request for a safety data sheet (SDS) from the supplier. The SDS shall be initially reviewed for the hazards associated with the chemical by the Safety Officer or designee to perform a safety review of the chemical purchase.

3.2. Hazardous Chemical List

3.2.1. A Hazardous Chemical List shall be compiled and maintained of hazardous chemicals known to be present using a product identifier that is referenced on the appropriate safety data sheet (the list may be compiled for the department as a whole or for individual work areas). The list should be placed in the front of a legible, clearly labeled, binder (cover should be marked “SDS Binder” or “Hazardous Chemical List”) followed by safety data sheets for each chemical on the list. The Hazardous Chemical List and SDS shall be readily accessible to all employees during each work shift. The inventory shall be reviewed and updated at least yearly. Appendix B – Chemical Inventory Form can be used to record your chemical list. A copy of the Hazardous Chemical List must be submitted annually, or upon request, to the Safety Officer. The Safety Officer will maintain a master list of hazardous chemicals.

3.3. Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

3.3.1. Safety data sheets (previously called Material Safety Data Sheets) shall be maintained in the workplace for each hazardous chemical exposure. New SDS will outline a 16-section format detailing headings, specific information under each heading in a specific order (see format sections below). All SDS shall be readily accessible to employees during the work shift when they are in their work areas(s). When employees travel between workplaces, departments must ensure that employees can obtain copies of SDS in the event of emergency. This can be accomplished via electronic access, verbal request for a faxed paper copy, scan and email, and other alternatives are permitted as long as no barriers to immediate employee access are created by such options. If an injury occurs requiring a SDS and the employee is in route to or at a medical facility, the SDS can be faxed or emailed directly to the medical provider; or a call placed directly to the manufacturer for the required information.

3.3.2. Following manufacturer re-authoring, if the SDS is not supplied prior to or with the initial shipment order of a chemical-based substance, the Safety Officer, area supervisor or designee will be responsible for obtaining the SDS from the manufacturer. Whenever a new chemical hazard is introduced, that product identifier must be added to the inventory list and a SDS obtained for the product.

3.3.3. Safety Data Sheet 16-Section Format:

- 3.3.3.1. Section 1, Identification
- 3.3.3.2. Section 2, Hazard(s) identification
- 3.3.3.3. Section 3, Composition/information on ingredients
- 3.3.3.4. Section 4, First-aid measure
- 3.3.3.5. Section 5, Firefighting measure
- 3.3.3.6. Section 6, Accidental release measure
- 3.3.3.7. Section 7, Handling and storage
- 3.3.3.8. Section 8, Exposure controls/personal protection
- 3.3.3.9. Section 9, Physical and chemical properties
- 3.3.3.10. Section 10, Stability and reactivity
- 3.3.3.11. Section 11, Toxicological information
- 3.3.3.12. Section 12, Ecological information
- 3.3.3.13. Section 13, Disposal considerations

- 3.3.3.14. Section 14, Transport information
 - 3.3.3.15. Section 15, Regulatory information; and
 - 3.3.3.16. Section 16, Other information, including date of preparation or last revision.
- 3.4. Labels and Labeling
- 3.4.1. Under modifications of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS), all labels on shipped containers coming into the workplace must be labeled, tagged, or marked with at least general information regarding the hazards of the chemicals, and which, in conjunction with the other information, will provide specific information regarding physical and health hazards of the hazardous chemicals. Each incoming label should provide:
 - 3.4.1.1. Product identifier
 - 3.4.1.2. Signal word
 - 3.4.1.3. Hazard statement(s)
 - 3.4.1.4. Pictogram(s)
 - 3.4.1.5. Precautionary statement(s); and
 - 3.4.1.6. Name, address, and telephone number of the chemical manufacturer, importer, or other responsible party.
 - 3.4.2. The manufacturer's label shall not be removed from products used by County employees. Defaced or damaged labels shall be replaced once discovered or prior to employee use of the product. The Safety Officer with help from affected employees, shall work to ensure proper container labeling.
 - 3.4.2.1. Labels shall be legible, in English, and prominently displayed on the container or readily available in the work area throughout each work shift. The label information can be added in other languages, as long as the information is presented in English as well. GHS modifications have designated eight (8) label pictograms with symbols and graphic elements (such as color, border, and background pattern) that are intended to convey specific information about the hazards of the chemical on the label. The pictograms are displayed in Appendix B.
 - 3.4.3. There are two (2) exceptions to the labeling requirements above:
 - 3.4.3.1. Signs, placards, process sheets, batch tickets, operating procedures, or other written materials may be used in lieu of affixing labels to individual stationary containers. When this method is used, labeling must identify the content of the containers; convey the appropriate hazard warnings; and all written materials readily accessible to employees in their work area throughout each work shift.
 - 3.4.3.2. A chemical transferred from a labeled container to a portable container that is intended for immediate use by a single employee working that shift does not require labeling. However, the transferred chemical substance cannot remain in an unlabeled container beyond that shift or used by another employee working another shift.
- 3.5. Training
- 3.5.1. Buncombe County shall provide employees with effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new chemical hazard is introduced into their work area. Annual training and

re-training records shall be maintained as a part of the program. The training components will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 3.5.1.1. Overview of the North Carolina Standard, GHS modifications, and this written policy
- 3.5.1.2. Name of the Safety officer or designee for department, division and/or facility
- 3.5.1.3. Operations in the work area where hazardous chemicals are present
- 3.5.1.4. Location and availability of the written Hazard Communication Program, including the required list(s) of hazardous chemicals, and safety data sheets
- 3.5.1.5. Methods and observations that may be used to detect the presence or release of a hazardous chemical in the work area
- 3.5.1.6. The physical, health, simple asphyxiation, combustible dust and pyrophoric gas hazards, as well as hazards not otherwise classified, of the chemicals in the work area
- 3.5.1.7. Measures employees can take to protect themselves from hazards (i.e., appropriate work practices, personal protective equipment, etc.);
- 3.5.1.8. A detailed explanation of the workplace labeling system, safety data sheets, trade secret information and instruction on how to obtain and use the appropriate hazard information
- 3.5.1.9. Procedure to report any incident of overexposure or spill of a hazardous chemical including hazardous chemicals emergency contacts (Appendix C – Hazardous Chemicals Contacts and Emergency Phone Numbers).

3.6. Contractors

- 3.6.1. Outside contractors must be advised of any chemical hazard that may be encountered in the normal course of their work on Buncombe County premises, any labeling system in use, the location and availability of SDS, protective measures to be taken, and safe handling procedures to be used. The Contractor Hazard Communication Form (Appendix D) must be completed and signed by the County Project Supervisor and the Outside Contractor. The original should be retained for departmental records and a copy forwarded to the Safety Officer.
- 3.6.2. Contractors bringing chemicals onto Buncombe County premises must provide the County Project Supervisor with the appropriate hazard information on these chemicals, including the labels used and precautionary measures to be taken in working with the chemicals. This includes contract-cleaning services, if any, and the products used by the cleaning service.

4. Policy Non-Compliance

Employees willfully violating the terms and conditions of this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

5. Audit

All policies for Buncombe County may be subject to audit or review as outlined in the [Internal Auditor's Statement](#).

6. Definitions

- 6.1. Chemical – any substance, or mixture of substances.

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- 6.2. Chemical name – the scientific designation of a chemical in accordance with the nomenclature system developed by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) or the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) rules of nomenclature, or a name which will clearly identify the chemical for the purpose of conducting a hazard classification.
- 6.3. Common name – Any designation or identification such as a code name, code number, trade name, brand name, or generic name used to identify a chemical other than by its chemical name.
- 6.4. Employee – A worker who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals under normal operating conditions or in foreseeable emergencies.
- 6.5. GHS – Globally Harmonized System.
- 6.6. Hazard statement – a statement assigned to a hazard class and category that describes the nature of the hazard(s) of a chemical, including, where appropriate, the degree of hazard.
- 6.7. Hazardous chemical – any chemical which is classified as a physical hazard or a health hazard, a simple asphyxiant, combustible dust, pyrophoric gas, or hazard not otherwise classified.
- 6.8. Immediate use – the hazardous chemical will be under the control of and used only by the person who transfers it from a labeled container and only within the work shift in which it is transferred.
- 6.9. Label – an appropriate group of written, printed or graphic information elements concerning a hazardous chemical that is affixed to, printed on, or attached to the immediate container of a hazardous chemical, or to the outside packaging.
- 6.10. Product identifier – the name or number used for a hazardous chemical on a label or in the SDS. It provides a unique means by which the user can identify the chemical.
- 6.11. Safety data sheet (SDS) – written or printed material concerning a hazardous chemical that is prepared in accordance with OSHA 1910.1200.
- 6.12. Work area – a room or defined space in a workplace where hazardous chemicals are produced or used, and where employees are present.
- 6.13. Work place – an establishment, job site, or project, at one geographical location containing one or more work areas.

7. Approval and Revision History

Policy Origination Date:	May 26, 2023
Requires Board Approval:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Board Approval Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Policy Exclusions	None
Revision History:	Enter Dates and changes

8. Background

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