



COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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UNDERSTANDING THE MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET

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This fact sheet describes what the Material Safety Data Sheet is, how it is to be used, and covers the sections of the MSDS.

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Understanding the Material Safety Data Sheet

The **Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)** is a technical bulletin that provides workers and emergency personnel with the proper procedures for handling or working with that substance. The MSDS includes information such as physical data (melting point, boiling point, flash point), toxicity, health effects, first aid, reactivity, storage, protective equipment, and spill/leak procedures. The MSDS supplements the information provided on the container's label (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [The Pesticide Label](#)). Remember that if a chemical accident occurs, do not rely solely on the MSDS. Additional information from pesticide labels and labeling about the chemicals involved in an accident may be critical to a safe response.

A supplier must develop or obtain an MSDS for each controlled product he/she sells or imports. Information must be current and prepared not more than three years before sale or importation.

A copy of the current MSDS must be sent to the purchaser on or before the date of sale at the time of the first purchase. Copies of MSDS must be accessible to personnel and close to their work areas. Personnel must be able to interpret and apply the information presented in the MSDS.

Notice that although the formats of the MSDS vary, they usually convey the same basic information. Do not be confused by different formats. Most pesticide manufacturers include additional information on the MSDS that may be useful to those handling the material along the supply chain.

Chemical suppliers must ensure that they provide distributors and employers an appropriate MSDS with their initial shipment and with the first shipment after a MSDS update. The chemical suppliers must either provide MSDS with the shipped containers or send them to the employer prior to or at the time of the shipment. If the MSDS is not provided with a shipment that has been labeled as a hazardous chemical, the purchaser must obtain one from the chemical supplier as soon as possible.

The employer must:

- Maintain copies of the required MSDS for each hazardous chemical in the workplace.
- Ensure that MSDSs are readily accessible during each work shift to employees.

