

FIREHOUSE®

Weekly Drill

DRILL #94: THE MSDS: PART 1

Introduction

One of the rare, but welcomed pieces of information at a Hazardous Material incident is the material safety data sheet (MSDS). The MSDS is a document that is full of helpful information about the specific hazardous material you are dealing with. The MSDS is comprised of 16 sections that will assist you in managing the incident and keeping everyone safe.

The information in the MSDS was initially for safety professionals and trained workers in the chemical industry. The MSDS is the basic tool that organizations and their employees have available to use as a guide to safe practices and emergency responses. It is the employers responsibility to provide the MSDS, but it's your responsibility to read it and follow the instructions found within.

Section I: Chemical Product and Company Identification – In this section you will find the name, address and phone number of the company that produced the material, the date that the MSDS was issued (note: this date should be the most recent revision) and the name of the material.

Section II: Composition/Information on Ingredients – This section will list the product's individual hazardous chemicals and their relative percentages. The Chemical Abstract Service (CAS) number along with the ingredients that meet the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication standards will be listed here. If applicable, the chemical's exposure limits will be listed here as well.

Section III: Hazards Identification Information – This section is divided into two areas. Part I describes the appearance of the material and provides the most significant concerns for emergency personnel, i.e. a probable carcinogen. Part II provides information on the potential adverse health effects and symptoms should there be an exposure to the material. Acute and chronic health effects, symptoms of exposure and medical conditions aggravated by exposures must be stated in this section.

Section IV: First Aid Measures – This section describes medical and first-aid treatments for accidental expo-



sures. Additionally, any known antidotes that may be administered will be indicated in this section.

Section V: Fire Fighting Measures – Basic fire fighting guidance is presented here along with fire and explosive properties of the material for the firefighters, employees and other emergency responders.

Section VI: Accidental Release Measures – This section provides spill, leak and response procedures for responders. It covers evacuation procedures, containment and clean-up techniques.

Section VII: Handling and Storage – Safe handling and storage information is covered in this section.

Section VIII: Exposure Controls and Personal Protection – This section focuses on exposure controls and provides guidance for the personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to be worn.

We will discuss the remaining eight sections in Part 2 of this article.

–Prepared by Russell Merrick