

Hazard Communication Standard

On May 3rd 2004, NJ Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Program (PEOSH) adopted the Federal Hazard Communication Standard (HCS). This resulted in the combining of certain elements of the NJ Right to Know Program with the Federal Hazard Communication Standard creating the PEOSH HCS.

Like the NJ RTK law, the new program applies to all work operations at Public Employers where employees are exposed or may be exposed to hazardous chemicals.

The PEOSH HCS contains traditional requirements of NJ RTK such as:

- Submittal of an annual RTK workplace survey (chemical inventory)
- Chemical labeling requirements
- Access to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's)
- Hazardous Substances Fact Sheets (HSFS's)
- Training
- Request for information

The main changes to the NJ RTK requirements are:

- Employees must be trained prior to starting work. (Previously, the NJ RTK program allowed 30 days to train workers.)
- Chemical inventories and MSDS's must be updated as new chemicals are brought into the workplace and made readily available during each workshift. NJ RTK required an annual update of the inventory and MSDS's must be acquired within 5 days for new chemicals.
- Labels must meet the requirements of both RTK and HCS standards.
- A written Hazard Communication Program must be developed for the workplace.

Laboratories are required to:

- Ensure that labels are not defaced or removed from incoming containers
- Maintain MSDS's and make them readily available in their work areas during each workshift.
- Provide information and training for laboratory employees.
- Ensure when shipping hazardous chemicals that containers are labeled in accordance with PEOSH HCS and MSDS's are provided.

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