

## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

## Road freight transport industry – Use and storage of chemicals

Chemicals are used in the road freight transport industry. Those more commonly used are truck washes and other cleaning chemicals.

Chemicals can enter the body through inhalation, skin contact or by accidentally swallowing the substance and can have both short and long term health effects.

There are a number of things that must be done to manage the risks from using or storing chemicals:

- make sure all chemical containers have a label on them that clearly identifies what it is and the main safety information about the chemical (e.g. 'Flammable', 'Harmful in contact with Skin')
- make sure that when chemicals are decanted that the containers are labelled clearly with the product name together with any risk or safety phrases
- obtain a material safety data sheet (MSDS) from your chemical supplier for all the chemicals you have. The MSDS will help you to identify any potential health and safety effects and the precautions to follow when using the chemical. It also provides information on safe handling, storage and disposal and first aid instructions in the event of an exposure. If you can't get a MSDS for a substance (for example if you purchase it from a retail outlet) then the label can be a useful source of information. If you can't get enough information from the label there is usually a contact number for the manufacturer, so you can request the MSDS

- put a copy of the MSDS in a folder with a register that lists all the hazardous chemicals that are used at the workplace in the front of the folder
- read the MSDS and do a written risk assessment to help you figure out how you can use the chemical safely. If after reading the MSDS you decide that there are risks from using a chemical, or having it in the workplace, you will need to do something to eliminate or reduce the risks. The best way to do this is to remove the source of the problem:
  - Is it possible to stop using the chemical altogether? Or
  - Can another less dangerous chemical be used instead?

It is a good idea to keep that written risk assessment with the MSDS in your hazardous substances register (folder). A risk assessment looks at what could go wrong while using the chemical and what controls can be put in place to stop any accidents from happening

- put in place those things you decide to do in your risk assessment to make using the chemical safe
- train people who have to use the chemical in how to use it safely
- make the MSDS and risk assessments freely available to those people who have to use the chemicals so they can refer to them.

Some chemicals are also flammable and may cause a fire or explosion if there is a source of ignition such as:

- static electricity and electrical sparks
- cigarettes, naked lights
- electrical switches, lighting and non-flameproof electrical equipment.

Therefore keep such ignition sources away from areas where flammable cleaning products are being used and stored. The MSDS will tell you if the product is flammable.

For more information on use and storage of chemicals and other workplace health and safety issues visit [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) or call 1300 369 915.

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