

SCF Arizona your business partner in Workers  
Compensation Insurance and workplace safety



## Keep workers safe from hazardous materials

*SCF Arizona your Work Comp Specialist*

Provided by Ed Redmond  
Association Coordinator

More than 30 million U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous chemicals each year on the job, according to the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#).

At the same time, one of the most common reasons OSHA cites businesses for failing to comply with workplace safety regulations is because they fall short in meeting the federal agency's Hazardous Communication Standard (HazComm), which is designed to protect workers from exposure to dangerous chemicals.

The HazComm standard requires employers to provide workers with information and training on all chemicals they handle on the job, the hazards associated with those chemicals, how to protect themselves against exposure and what to do if they are exposed.

The standard also requires proper labeling of chemicals, maintaining a written HazComm program, an inventory of all hazardous chemicals, training employees and up-to-date information on each hazardous chemical.

"It's there for the employees to know what they are dealing with," said Gerry Coley, a loss control consultant for [SCF Arizona](#), the state's largest provider of workers' compensation insurance.

To help Arizona employers understand the HazComm standard and comply with it, SCF's loss control safety experts recommend that business owners and safety directors:

- Become familiar with the OSHA standard. The agency provides a simple summary in its free brochure "Chemical Hazard Communication" (OSHA 3084). It can be obtained by calling the [Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health](#) (ADOSH) office at 602.542.5795 in Phoenix or 502.628.5478 in Tucson; OSHA's Publications Office at 202.693.1888. SCF also offers a brochure and a convenient fact card, which can be ordered online at [www.scfaz.com](#). For the brochure, order 64-481 and for the fact card, order 64-9121.
- Identify responsible workers who will ensure compliance. A properly run HazComm program is not a one-shot deal. It requires ongoing training. For example, the standard requires training employees every time a new chemical is introduced into the workplace. Finding workers to handle the responsibility ensures continuity and accountability. Coley says that "reviewing the HazComm program on a regular basis with follow-up training is critical."
- Make a written inventory of hazardous chemicals in your workplace. This list should not be limited to liquids in containers. It should cover hazardous solids, gases, vapors, fumes and mists, which cannot be contained. Once compiled, make sure a Material Safety Data Sheet is available for each hazardous chemical. These MSDS sheets contain essential information such as medical symptoms and recommended care if exposed.
- Ensure that all employees know where to find the MSDS.
- Create a written HazComm program specific to your workplace. This program should address labeling requirements, employee information and training, and established procedures. MSDS and the written program must be available and accessible to all workers. That means if you keep the MSDS in your office and the office closes at 5 p.m., the night shift can't access the information, which is a violation of the regulation.

*If you would like more information on workplace safety please contact your Association Coordinator Ed Redmond*

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Free safety training materials are available as are streaming videos, interactive quizzes and even a Quick Quote option, which takes only three easy steps.

[http://www.scfaz.com/safety/safety.php?load=online\\_training.html&bc=Online+Safety+Training](http://www.scfaz.com/safety/safety.php?load=online_training.html&bc=Online+Safety+Training)

Coley recommended that employer make sure that all employees review MSDS prior to handling highly hazardous materials.

“If you get something in your eye or skin, it may be too late to look it up in the book,” he cautioned.

Finally, he said it is imperative to understand proper labeling and MSDS requirements. While chemical manufacturers, importers and distributors are responsible for providing the MSDS for their products, an employer must obtain the necessary information if a chemical does not have one.

Labels must include the chemical’s name, the hazard warning and the hazardous effects. Labels also must be legible and prominently displayed.

Updating the MSDS to match with current inventory could help prevent OSHA citations, Coley said.

To get more information on how to implement a successful HazComm program, go to [www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/whatishazcom.html](http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/whatishazcom.html). To read an SCF story about how a local business created an effective HazComm program, visit [www.scfaz.com](http://www.scfaz.com), click on “Safety,” then *AZ@Work* magazine.

SCF Arizona is the state’s largest workers’ compensation insurer, providing coverage to more than 35,000 active policyholders and some 500,000 employees statewide. SCF has operated in Arizona for 85 years, holds \$3.4 billion in assets and employs more than 500 people. SCF is headquartered in Phoenix and has offices in Flagstaff, Lake Havasu City, Prescott, Show Low, Tucson and Yuma. For more information about SCF Arizona, visit [www.scfaz.com](http://www.scfaz.com)

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