Get to know the MSDS—it could save your life.
If there are any hazardous materials, substances, or wastes in your workplace, you should get to know the Material Safety Data Sheet—MSDS for short.

Knowledge is power and SAFETY!
The MSDS first tells you the identity of the hazardous material: what it is called on the label. And in case you need even more information than the MSDS contains, this section gives you the name and address of the company that makes the chemical plus the phone numbers to call for information or in the event of an emergency.

The MSDS can be the #1 safety tool on the job.
Companies that make and distribute hazardous substances have to provide companies like yours an MSDS on each substance and mixture of hazardous substances. That is so you have one place to look for everything you need to know about a chemical’s hazards—and what you can do to work with it safely.

There is no single mandatory form
For the MSDS, so you will probably see many different types on the job. What is consistent, though, is the type of information included on each form. Once you understand what this information is and how it is to be used, you will be able to use any type of MSDS you run up against to protect yourself.

You deserve to know all the facts.
OSHA requires an MSDS as part of the Hazard Communication Standard, or Right to Know regulation. They wanted to make sure you had one easy reference for every sort of information on a hazardous substance:

You learn still more about the chemical in the Hazardous Ingredients/Identity Information section. You will find the substance’s hazardous components, chemical ID, and common names. Worker exposure limits to the chemical such as the OSHA PEL, ACGIH TLV, and other recommended sale exposure limits are also included.

You can control potential hazards by understanding their characteristics.
Next you will find out about the chemical’s physical and chemical characteristics.

You don’t have to be a chemist
To understand the MSDS information, but if you don’t understand, or aren’t sure about something, ask your supervisor or consult your company’s written hazard communication program.

You will find applicable physical and chemical characteristics:
- Boiling point/melting point
- Evaporation rate Vapor pressure Water solubility Vapor density
- Appearance and odor under normal conditions

The Fire and Explosion Hazard Data section helps you judge the risk of these two dangerous hazards. The FLASH POINT tells you the minimum temperature at which the vapors from a liquid might ignite. Flammability limits indicate the concentration of the substance, in the form of gas or a vapor that is needed for it to ignite. Ignition is less likely below the lower limit or above the upper limit.

Health Hazard Data
Is one of the most important parts of the MSDS to you.
It tells how a chemical could enter your body:
• Inhaling
• Swallowing
• Through the skin

Then it lists specific possible health hazards—things that could happen to you if you are exposed to the chemical.

Some effects like skin burns are acute: They show up right after exposure.

Others like lung cancer are chronic: They are the result of exposure long ago or repeated exposure over a long period of time.

Reduce the risks through careful handling
After the MSDS explains all the reasons why you should handle and use a substance carefully, it tells you how to do it.

Precautions for Safe Handling and Use
Begin by explaining what to do if there is a spill, leak, or any accidental chemical release.

It also tells you how to handle and store the substance safely, as well as any other precautions you might need to follow to protect yourself and those around you.

The MSDS also tells you what to use—ABC, CO2, foam, etc.—to put out a fire—and if there are any special hazards or fire-fighting procedures to follow.

Protect yourself
Read control measures carefully!

It covers the protective equipment you might need, as well as the work and hygiene practices and the ventilation required to keep your chances of exposure low.

The MSDS will explain what types of equipment to use when you work with this substance such as:
• Type of respirator
• Gloves

• Eye protection
• Other protective clothes or equipment

Some Things just don’t Mix Well
The information on the Reactivity Data explains what could happen if this chemical is combined with other chemicals, or with water or air. This information is especially useful if there is a spill. It can also help you decide where and how to store substances that could have dangerous reactions, such as fire or explosion, if accidentally combined.

CHECK THE MSDS… before you start any job using a hazardous chemical. That way you will know the risks and how to do the job safely. Then, follow procedures exactly!