

# Chemical Storage

If your company stores chemicals there are several guidelines that need to be followed. Depending upon the type of chemicals you plan to store, how and where you store them is important. Under the OSHA Hazard Communication Standards, chemical importers and manufacturers must evaluate the hazards their chemicals pose, appropriately label chemicals and provide for the consumer a Material Data Safety Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical. Additionally, employers using hazardous chemicals must label, train their workers how to handle them and have a MSDS readily available for each chemical.

**OSHA has three basic legal requirements for storing chemicals:**

- Each chemical you store must have an accompanying MSDS that lists the substance's known toxicity, flammability or acidic or caustic properties as well as how the chemical behaves in fire, an accidental exposure incident and how spills are treated;
- The MSDS must be readily available when needed;
- A written training plan with information on training sessions and dates for all employees working with these chemicals is also required.

Simply shelving chemicals and chemical compounds is not sufficient under OSHA requirements. Chemicals need to be separated and stored by their particular class, preferably in separate cabinets. Chemicals that have a negative interaction with one another should be stored some distance apart to avoid accidentally triggering a hazardous situation. For example, solvents should be stored together in a fire-resistant cabinet while oxidizing agents should be stored well away from them. Similarly, acids such as nitric, acetic, sulfuric and hydrochloric should be gathered away from such bases as

potassium and sodium hydroxides, aqueous ammonia, slaked lime and sodium carbonate. They are corrosive and when mixed with acids, can become heat-generating. Additionally, all cylinders must be labeled on the cylinder's shoulder with either the type of chemical or its trade name. Essentially, a facility needs five chemical storage areas or cabinets: a general storage cabinet or area where chemicals can be shelved separately based on their categories or hazardous rating; a cabinet or area for sulfuric and nitric acids; a cabinet for corrosive acids; a specialized cabinet for flammable chemicals; and a cabinet or area for corrosive bases.

For the complete OSHA requirements regarding chemical use and storage please visit [OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1200](#).