

## **TOOLBOX TALK #15**

### **UNIDENTIFIED CONTAINERS**

In the workplace, using the wrong chemical for a task can have dire consequences. In addition to physical hazards that can occur when the wrong chemicals are mixed, some chemicals that are used every day in construction can have serious health effects if they are not stored, handled or used correctly.



To help prevent injuries and deaths from working with hazardous chemicals, OSHA requires employers to establish a Hazard Communication Program. This program must identify all of the hazardous chemicals and compounds used by the company on the jobsite so that they can be communicated with employees. The hazard communication standard also requires employers to maintain safety data sheets (SDS), train employees and to ensure that all containers are properly labeled.

Training and proper container labeling helps to ensure that employees understand a product's associated hazards as well as any special precautions that need to be taken to handle and use it safely. The information on the container's label serves as a visual reminder each time the product is in use.

OSHA requires all containers of hazardous chemicals used in the workplace to be labeled with

- Name of the product
- Manufacturer's name, address and telephone number
- Pictogram(s)
- Signal words, precautionary statements and first aid information
- Hazard statements

Labels must be in English and must be legible.

Employees who have received hazard communication training sometimes ask why all containers don't have pictograms, signal words, precautionary and hazard statements on them if OSHA requires it. One reason is that OSHA only governs workplace hazards. Products that are used in homes do not fall under OSHA's jurisdiction. OSHA was also clear about several other types of container labeling that are exempted from the hazard communication standard because they are governed by other regulatory bodies which have their own methods of communicating necessary product and hazard information.