



# Safety Insights

## Summer Cleaning: Working with Chemicals

In Pennsylvania, there is safety regulation regarding working with chemicals titled Worker and Community Right to Know. It is a copy of the Federal OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standard Hazard Communication. There are certain rights and obligations that workers using chemicals in the workplace need to be familiar with in order to be safe.

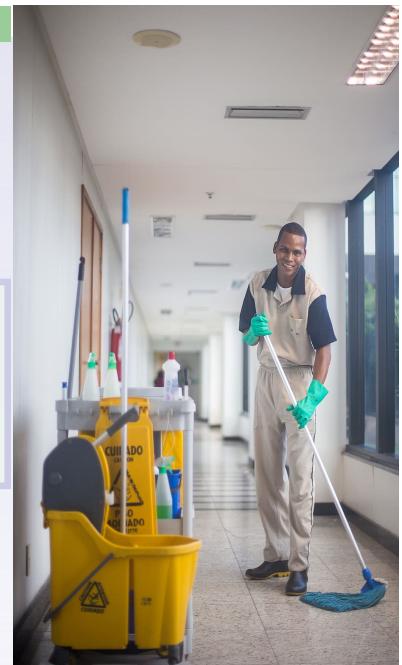
Under the regulation, any chemical used in the workplace should have a material safety data sheet (MSDS) accompanying its entry into the facility. This information sheet gives you important data about the chemical's hazards, symptoms of overexposure, how to protect yourself when using the material/hazardous substance, and what to do if involved in accident with the chemical. These MSDS sheets should be placed in a binder, organized in alphabetical order by trade name, and available to all employees throughout the work day without them having to ask a supervisor for the binder, having to go into an office or even accessing a filing cabinet for the information.

Before working with any chemical, and this applies to both custodial and maintenance staff primarily but also foodservice (detergents used to clean dish wear are pretty potent in concentrated form), you need to review the specific MSDS. What you should check for are: dangers of the substance, how to protect yourself and check listing of personal protective equipment (PPE) you will need to use (your employer is responsible for providing the necessary PPE), symptoms of over exposure, and how to treat injuries. The employee is responsible for this follow-up but supervisors need to monitor compliance.

In Pennsylvania, training on Worker and Community Right to Know needs to be completed in some form on an annual basis. You have choice of classroom, tutorial, supervisor safety talk, or whatever provides results that (1) list of people who attended training, (2) you have copy of the material you covered, and (3) confirm that employees have basic understanding of the regulation. In addition, as a manager, you would want to confirm through routine job observations that employees are following proper safety procedures. No shortcuts here. Oftentimes, chemicals are unforgiving if mis-used or mishandled. And, some individuals develop allergic reactions to chemicals even if using properly. Pay attention. An ounce of prevention here is worth a pound of cure, to use an old saw.

Other elements of this program include: have a written program, choosing a program coordinator (point of contact and program administrator), annual review of all MSDS files in the District, coordinating activities with outside contractors (information exchange here on any work done in the District involving chemicals), making sure everyone knows the importance of labeling all containers (one label per container and it should identify the contents) and having lids/caps in place when not in use, and having the proper personal protective equipment available for workers.

This is one program that is it critical to be proactive. You don't want to have these kinds of injury exposures. Be safe and take the time to do it right.



### Tips for Heat Exposure

- \* Determine roles and responsibilities for day to day supervision and planning
- \* Determine availability of first aid supplies
- \* Plan for training and ongoing communication with employees.
- \* Consider how to respond to heat advisories and warnings





# Electrical Safety Checklist

Source: Safety National/BLR Resources

**DO:**

- Check wiring to make sure it's properly insulated and the right choice for the job (e.g., labeled for use outdoors or in work areas with hazardous substances)
- Match plugs and outlets (three-pronged plugs go in three-pronged outlets only).
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for electrical equipment.
- Obey warnings to stay away from electrical circuits and locked-out equipment.
- Wear rubber gloves and any other assigned protective clothing and equipment.

**DON'T:**

- Overload motors, circuits, or outlets.
  - Run cords along the floor.
  - Use temporary wiring.
  - Leave machinery or heating equipment running unattended after working hours.
  - Let cords get twisted or tangled.
- Reach blindly into a space that may contain energized equipment.
- Wear metal jewelry when working with electrical appliances.
  - Use a power tool that smokes, sparks, smells, or shocks

## ***CAN YOU LIST THE KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF A SAFETY COMMITTEE??***

### Working Alone Safely

Many employees work by themselves for at least part of their shifts, including delivery drivers, janitorial and housekeeping workers, cafeteria workers, and many night shift employees. Working alone comes with its own safety and security hazards, and those hazards vary widely from job to job. It's important for lone workers to know all of their responsibilities and what to do during an emergency so they can safely perform their job duties without supervision. Supervisors should be able to recognize who lone workers are and the hazards they may face.

<https://cdn.safetyskills.com/courses-able>

### Safety and Loss Prevention Support

To ensure our members have access to effective loss prevention support, SDIC partners with Compliance Management International (CMI) who is a full-service safety, health and environmental risk management firm. CMI is available to work with you to improve and maintain effective injury prevention and safety management programs.

CMI's team of certified safety professionals (CSP), certified industrial hygienists (CIH), and injury prevention professionals can assist you to develop or optimize your safety program including the following areas:

- ◆ Chemical Right-To-Know program that meets Pennsylvania Worker and Community Right to Know Law (PA Code 34) and protects employees from exposure to cleaning and laboratory chemicals.
- ◆ Kitchen safety program that ensures food preparation and cooking hazards are properly identified and controlled.
- ◆ Formal safety inspections of buildings and grounds that are geared towards preventing injuries for both employees and students.
- ◆ Indoor air quality assessments to ensure exposure to water damage or chemical usage is properly controlled.

- ◆ Injury investigation and management programs to investigate and correct the root causes of injuries and illnesses.

CMI's team of professional and highly engaging trainers can work with you to deliver the following customized training programs:

- ◆ Right to Know / Chemical Management
- ◆ Food Service and Kitchen Safety
- ◆ Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention
- ◆ Workplace Safety Committee Support and Optimization
- ◆ Resolving Indoor Air Quality Concerns
- ◆ On-site Building and Grounds Inspections
- ◆ Injury and Accident Investigation
- ◆ Employee and Manager Training Programs
- ◆ Other Seminars Geared Toward Injury Reduction

We have helped hundreds of public schools improve their workers' compensation experience and will work hand-in-hand with you to provide these valuable safety and training programs.

Contact Us For more information on how CMI can support your business, please contact SDIC's Safety Coordinator, Carly Boyd at [cboyd@sdicwc.org](mailto:cboyd@sdicwc.org) or (800) 445-6965 x2113.

# Are you taking necessary steps to protect summer workers?

Source: BLR/Safety National

Summer is almost here, and that means seasonal workers—including thousands of young people—are temporarily on the payroll. It's your duty to protect them by providing a workplace free from known safety and health risks. Keep reading for timely tips.

About 80 percent of U.S. teens work sometime during their high school years, often during the summer. They bring energy and a willingness to work to the job, but they are also inexperienced and less likely to speak up about hazards than older workers. For these and other reasons, tens of thousands of teens are injured on the job each year, and dozens lose their lives.

As an employer, you're bound by provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act and by the Fair Labor Standards Act, which restricts the types of jobs teens younger than 18 can hold and the hours they can work. States also have their own laws about teen work.

## Stay in compliance to keep summer workers safe on the job

Among your responsibilities as an employer of young workers, OSHA lists the following:

- Understand and comply with relevant federal and state child labor laws.
- Train young workers to recognize hazards and use safe work practices. Training should be in a language and vocabulary employees understand and should address fire prevention, accidents, violent situations, and what to do if an injury occurs.
- Implement a buddy or mentor system for new young workers. Pair them with an adult or experienced young worker to help them learn the ropes and the rules.
- Encourage teens to ask questions about tasks or procedures that are unclear or are not understood.

## INFORMATION WEBSITES

SDIC

[www.sdicwc.org](http://www.sdicwc.org)

Dept. of Labor & Industry

[www.dli.pa.gov](http://www.dli.pa.gov)

Occupational Health & Safety (OSHA)

[www.ohsonline.com](http://www.ohsonline.com)

Professional Safety Training

[www.complianceplace.com](http://www.complianceplace.com)

## National Safety Observances

This summer, let's think about how we can put safety into practice, taking prevention efforts from our workplace to anyplace, by drawing our attention to the following national, annual observances:

**May – Electrical Safety Month**

**June – National Safety Month**

**July – Fireworks Safety Month**

## Safety Committee Training Materials

We have partnered with Safety National to offer schools and your safety committees access to online training content!

Visit SDIC's customized Training Website at <https://sdic.inclassnow.com/>

If you are a new learner, please sign up by doing the following:

- Sign up as a new user. A simple form to log in will appear for learners to register.
- Use your email address as your login name and select your school district from the drop-down list.
- Click sign up.

When logged in, you will see the training (s) you have selected. Once added to your account, you will receive an email notification when materials are available.





## *It's summer, and the heat is here*

Source: BLR/Safety National #

It's that time of year again when heat illness is a particularly important safety concern. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), workers may experience longer or more intense heat exposures and are more likely to engage in strenuous physical activity in the heat than the general public.

### **What's the big deal about heat?**

Heat illness occurs when your body can't adequately cool itself through sweating. According to the National Safety Council (NSC), heat-related illnesses can escalate rapidly, leading to delirium, organ damage, and even death.

### **What are the dangers?**

If you work in hot conditions, you can be at risk of several heat-related illnesses. The following are heat-related illnesses and what to look for:

- **Heat rash** consists of red, irritated bumps and is a sign that hot conditions are affecting your body.
- **Heat syncope (fainting)** can occur when a person is not used to working in a hot environment.
- **Heat cramps** is caused by a loss of salt when sweating. Severe cramps may require a visit to a medical professional.
- **Heat exhaustion** occurs if you have lost too much fluid, salt, or both through sweating.

**Heatstroke** occurs when the body's natural cooling processes stop working, and the ill person stops sweating. Symptoms of heatstroke include very hot and dry skin, confusion, convulsions, seizures, and loss of consciousness. Heatstroke is very serious and can lead to death.

### **What can you do to keep cool?**

All of these heat-related illnesses can be easily prevented by taking the following steps while working in hot conditions:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day. In hot conditions, you should aim for about 1 cup every 15 to 20 minutes.
- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing.
- Drink sports drinks to help replace the salt you lose when you sweat.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which can both cause dehydration.
- Take frequent breaks in a cool, shady place.
- If the temperature spikes suddenly or you are new to working in hot conditions, take more frequent breaks, and gradually build up your workload while your body adapts.

If you notice yourself experiencing symptoms of heat illness, tell your supervisor, and take a break in a cool, shaded area.

### **Quiz: The Heat Is Here**

Source: BLR/Safety National

Choose the correct response to the following statements.

1. Heat-related illnesses are neither serious nor life-threatening conditions. **True or False**
2. You can drink coffee and alcohol if you are working in hot conditions because they have water in them. **True or False**
3. It's recommended that in hot conditions, you should drink about 1 cup of \_\_\_\_ every \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ minutes.  
A. Sport (electrolyte) drink; 10 to 15  
B. Water; 15 to 20  
C. Water; 30 to 40
4. Heat cramps are caused by a loss of salt when sweating. **True or False.**
5. Heatstroke occurs when the body's natural cooling processes stop working and you stop sweating. **True or False**

(Continued from page 3)

- Make sure your communications are getting through. Young people are not just miniature adults; it may take different techniques to reach them.
- Be certain that equipment is legal and safe for teens to use. Label equipment younger workers are not allowed to operate, such as meat slicers or bakery mixers.

### What are the causes of young worker injuries and illnesses?

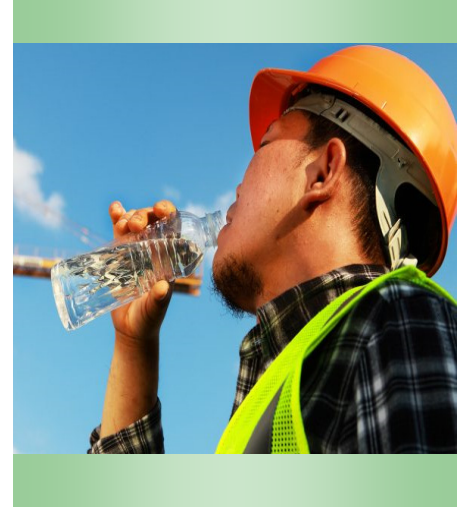
Teens get sick or injured on the job for many reasons. Among them are:

- Muscle sprains, strains, or tears;
- Unsafe equipment;
- Inadequate safety training;
- Inadequate supervision;
- Dangerous work that's illegal or inappropriate for teens;
- Pressure to work faster;
- Stressful conditions.

For those working outdoors, the hazards include:

- Exposure to the sun and heat,
- Exposure to landscaping chemicals,
- Mishaps involving machinery and vehicles,
- Electricity,
- Heavy lifting,
- Noise.

Remember that certain occupations are off-limits to young teens. The list includes mining, logging, meatpacking, roofing, excavation, and demolition. As well, they cannot drive a car or fork-lift on the job or work with saws, explosives, radioactive materials, or most machines.



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*“About 80 percent of U.S. teens work sometime during their high school years, often during the summer.”*

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## *Answers: The Heat is Here*

Source: BLR/Safety National

1. **False.** Heat-related illnesses can lead to some very serious and dangerous health problems, including organ damage and even death.
2. **False.** It's dangerous to drink alcohol or caffeinated drinks in hot conditions because they are diuretics and can cause dehydration.
3. **B.** If you are working in hot conditions, you should be drinking 1 cup of water every 15 to 20 minutes.
4. **True.** Heat cramps are caused by a lack of salt in your body when working in the heat. See a doctor or medical professional if you are having severe cramps.
5. **True.** If you are suffering from heatstroke, seek help immediately! Heatstroke is very serious and can lead to death.

## ABOUT SDIC

The mission of SDIC is to provide high quality loss control and claims management services to our member school districts. The administration and staff of SDIC are dedicated to fostering the spirit of cooperation, confidence and open communication for all its members. These values are beneficial to all the school districts we serve.

## LOSS CONTROL SERVICES

SDIC provides on-site Surveys and recommendations to identify existing or potential accident and illness hazards or safety program deficiencies. We offer customized training designed to meet your needs. Our Claims staff has over 20 years of experience in the area of Workers' Compensation claims management.

Please contact our Membership and Safety Coordinator, Carly Boyd, at [cboyd@sdicwc.org](mailto:cboyd@sdicwc.org) to schedule any of our free training services.

**SDIC, a self-insured Workers' Compensation Claims Administration Program for public schools, was founded in 1979.**

**SDIC, is the largest self-insured pool in Pennsylvania, providing its members with experience and aggressive claims management. We place strong emphasis on loss control, accident prevention, safety, and cost effectiveness. Our competitive rates are annually determined by our members.**

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