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SAFETY ALERT

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HAZARD COMMUNICATION

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has estimated that more than 32 million workers are exposed to 650,000 hazardous chemical products in more than 3 million American workplaces. This poses a serious problem for exposed workers and their employers.

Under the California Labor Code and the California Occupational Safety and Health Act, all employers in California are legally obligated to provide and maintain a safe and healthful workplace for employees which includes the establishment of a Hazard Communication Program. The basic goal of a Hazard Communication Program is to be sure employers and employees know about work hazards and how to protect themselves. This will help reduce the incidence of illness and injuries related to chemical exposure.

The Hazard Communication Standard requires employers to maintain and update an annual inventory of all chemical products used on site. In addition, a hard or electronic copy of Safety Data Sheets for all chemical products used on site must be available to employees at all times. The law also requires training to employees on the Hazard Communication Standard at the time of hire, annually thereafter, and upon introduction of new chemical products.

The District has updated its Hazard Communication Program to reflect recent changes to the standard and is available on the Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) website at <http://lausd-oehs.org/docs/CSC/HAZCOMProgram.pdf>. These changes include:

- **Hazard classification:** Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to determine the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import. Hazard classification under the new, updated standard provides specific criteria to address health and physical hazards as well as classification of chemical mixtures.
- **Labels:** Chemical manufacturers and importers must provide a label that includes a signal word, pictogram, hazard statement, and precautionary statement for each hazard class and category.
- **Safety Data Sheets** (formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheets): The new format requires 16 specific sections, ensuring consistency in presentation of important protection information.
- **Information and training:** To facilitate understanding of the new system, the new standard requires that workers be trained by December 1, 2013 on the new label elements and safety data sheet format, in addition to the current training requirements.

For additional information on implementing the required program, please visit the OEHS [website](#) or contact OEHS at (213) 241-3199.