

**NYS Unified Court System
Right to Know Law
(Exposure Control)**

SLIDE 1 (PICTURE)

The New York State Unified Court System. All of New York State's Halls of Justice. Beyond the bricks and mortar. Beyond the lawyers, plaintiffs and defendants. Beyond the judges and jurors. They all remain everyday workplaces for you; the employees. And, as in any other workplace, there are toxic and hazardous substances, (gaseous, liquid or solid) stored in the workplace that may be dangerous to your safety and health. For that reason, this program was created to ensure that the New York State Unified Court System and all of the facilities statewide are in compliance with the regulations under New York State's Right to Know Law.

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The Right to Know Law states that all employers must inform employees of health effects and hazards of toxic substances at the workplace. This program is designed to inform you of the possible dangers in dealing with hazardous chemicals, and the measures you can take in order to protect yourself.

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What are toxic or hazardous substances?

They are any chemical substance or mixture of a chemical substance in a liquid, gaseous, or solid state, which is manufactured, processed, used or stored at the workplace. You may not realize it, but you come in contact with chemicals everyday in a variety of ways. You may come across toxic chemicals while shopping at the supermarket or stopping for gas at your local station. In fact, chemicals are part of our everyday lives. This is equally true in our courts.

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- A Court Officer comes in contact with explosives, lead and other hazardous chemicals.

SLIDE 5 (PICTURE)

- A supply clerk, handles toner, alcohol and other toxic substances.

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- A custodian, may use as many as fifteen different toxic cleaners on any given day.

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- Even a court clerk, may not think he or she works with chemicals. However, even they on occasion come in contact with toxic chemicals.

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In order to ensure your safety in your workplace, the Office of Court Administration has designated a Work-Safe liaison at every work-site. The name of your Work-Safe liaison is located at the bottom of the Right to Know Law bulletin. This may be found posted on your employee bulletin board or in a similar convenient place.

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Training

- In addition to this presentation your Work-Safe liaison has completed a site specific information sheet to help employees understand the minimum standards to protect themselves from exposure to toxic or hazardous substances.
- This sheet contains information on the location of your facility's SDS book, personal protection equipment and nearest local hospital in the event of an exposure incident.
- The key to any program is communication, so you too must do your part. Please do not hesitate to notify your liaison and the Work-safe office of any hazardous situations, or if there is something you do not understand.

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Log of Hazardous Chemicals (SDS Book)

Your Work-Safe liaison maintains access to the SDS book which contains information about all hazardous chemicals used routinely at your workplace. This log is updated regularly and upon receipt of any additional chemicals. Your Work-Safe liaison also maintains and updates the safety data sheets found in the SDS book.

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What is a Safety Data Sheet? (SDS)

A safety data sheet, found in the original packing box and on the manufacturer's website, offers information and facts regarding each chemical. Safety data sheets, otherwise known as SDS, contain the following information:

- **Product Information** including the name of the chemical and the manufacturer.
- **Ingredients** with the acceptable exposure limits.
- **Physical Data** such as evaporation rates and boiling points.
- **Fire and Explosive Hazards** of the chemicals and materials listed.

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The SDS also contains the following:

- **Reactivity/Stability Data:** This explains the potential hazards that could occur when chemicals are mixed or if they come in contact with other material.
- **Health Hazards:** This section explains the health risks associated with exposure to the product.
- **Safe Handling Directions:** For example, what actions to take in the case of a spill or leak.
- **Protective Equipment:** This section suggests protective gear, such as: goggles, gloves, or any other special equipment that may be needed for handling chemicals.

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Chemical products used improperly may be dangerous to your health. It is strongly advised that you read directions and labels in order to ensure safe handling of all chemicals and substances.

SLIDE 14 (PICTURE)

Labels

In addition to the SDS information, the user cannot forget the importance of product labels. The label is the quickest and most successful way to obtain information. Each manufacturer is required to label products with hazardous information.

Never remove these labels!

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Exposure to Chemicals Can Harm You

Therefore it is important to be aware of the ways in which chemical substances can enter the body.

There are four main ways:

- **Inhalation:** Sometimes simply breathing toxic chemicals inadvertently can cause an effect.
- **Absorption:** This occurs through mucous membranes in the body such as those located around your eyes.
- **Direct Contact:** This can occur either directly through the skin or through open cuts and abrasions.
- **Ingestion:** These chemicals can also be ingested. Passed from dirty hands to the food we eat, or entrapped in drinks left opened in chemical areas.

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To protect yourself from chemical exposure, remember these rules:

- Avoid ingesting chemicals.
- Wash your hands.
- Wear personal protective equipment.

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Effects of Chemical Substances

Chemical substances can affect us in two general ways:

- **Acute Effects:** They can have an immediate effect on you if you're exposed to enough of the chemical.
- **Chronic Effects:** This can result after repeated long-term exposure to a chemical.

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Procedures to Protect you from Chemical Exposure

- **Training and Education:** This informs you of the possible hazards, as well as, the procedures required to protect yourself.
- **Dust Fumes and Corrosives:** Proper maintenance and ventilation control the buildup of fumes, dust and gases. Your work site is liaison continuously monitored to ensure that your workplace is maintained and inspected on a regular basis.

SLIDE 19 (PICTURE)

We hope that this program has enhanced your understanding of the potential dangers when dealing with chemicals. The Right to Know Law was put into effect to ensure employee rights are protected. The New York State Unified Court System is dedicated to ensuring the workplace is the safest it can possibly be for its thousands of employees. Together we can maintain safe practices and work towards a safer and healthier environment for all.