

Occupational safety and health continued

Determining when an MSDS is necessary

Every year, material safety data sheet (MSDS) infringements are on OSHA’s list of most frequently cited violations. An MSDS provides extensive information about a particular chemical, including safety procedures to follow when working with it.

The flowchart below makes it easy to determine whether a chemical used in your facility requires an MSDS. Look at the product label for hazard indications. If warnings are present, continue on the appropriate path on the flowchart to find out whether you need an MSDS.

Keep your MSDS request letters on file

If you have requested an MSDS from the manufacturer but have not received it when an OSHA inspection occurs, retrieve a copy of the request from your files. In many cases, an MSDS request shows that a good-faith effort has been made and you can avoid a citation, according to OSHA’s *Inspection Procedures for the Hazard Communication Standard*.

A sample MSDS request form letter is in the recordkeeping section of your *OSHA Regulatory Manual for Healthcare*. ■

