

# Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances



Toolbox Talk #3

## What are Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances?

The words hazard and toxic are often used interchangeably in terms of talking about industrial substances or waste. Yet, these words have different meanings, and in order for you guys to safely work with them you should know the difference. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) a hazardous substance is one that is ignitable, corrosive, reactive, and toxic. A toxic substance is a substance or waste that when ingested or absorbed can be fatal and harmful to a person.

## How do we Ensure Employee Safety When Working with Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances?

- Information about the dangers of the chemicals must be presented to the employee working with them.
- Each employee must be properly trained prior to working with these materials, and the training must educate employees on the possible hazards of the substance.
- All employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces must have labels and safety data sheets for their exposed workers.
- Respiratory Protection is a must when working with these types of materials.

## Tips for Working with Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances

- \* Always use the least amount of any substance necessary to do the job.
- \* Report any signs of illness or overexposure immediately to the supervisor.
- \* Ensure the suitable emergency equipment for fires, spills and leaks are readily available.
- \* Prevent the release of toxic vapors, dusts, mists or gases into the workplace air.

