

## Recommended Format for Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs)

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) specifies certain information that must be included on MSDSs, but does not require that any particular format be followed in presenting this information (see [29 CFR 1910.1200 \(g\)](#)). In order to promote consistent presentation of information, OSHA recommends that MSDSs follow the 16-section format established by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard for preparation of MSDSs ([Z400.1](#)).

By following this recommended format, the information of greatest concern to workers is featured at the beginning of the data sheet, including information on chemical composition and first aid measures. More technical information that addresses topics such as the physical and chemical properties of the material and toxicological data appears later in the document. While some of this information (such as ecological information) is not required by the HCS, the 16-section MSDS is becoming the international norm. The 16 sections are:

- Identification
- Hazard(s) identification
- Composition/information on ingredients
- First-aid measures
- Fire-fighting measures
- Accidental release measures
- Handling and storage
- Exposure controls/personal protection
- Physical and chemical properties
- Stability and reactivity
- Toxicological information
- Ecological information
- Disposal considerations
- Transport information
- Regulatory information
- Other information

In 1985, OSHA established a voluntary format for MSDSs ([OSHA Form 174](#)) to assist manufacturers and importers who desired guidance on organizing MSDS information. When completed correctly, an MSDS prepared using Form 174 contains all of the information required by OSHA. However, Form 174 does not use the more organized and comprehensive 16-section format.

OSHA believes that use of a consistent format will improve the effectiveness of MSDSs by making information easier for the reader to find, regardless of the supplier of the MSDS. Because the 16-section format is accepted by consensus as the most appropriate format, OSHA no longer endorses that Form 174 be used for the preparation of MSDSs. Use of Form 174, however, is still acceptable under the HCS if it is completed correctly.

*Information obtained from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) [Website](#)*