

**PestSure**  **Safety**  
INSURING THE FUTURE OF PEST CONTROL

# Tips

**A five-minute training Series for Pest Management Professionals.**

### **What is a Hazardous Material?**

As a new employee, you received training on the "Hazard Communication Standard" alerting you to the chemicals in use at your worksite. This safety tip will help us review the standard and discuss potential chemical hazards present in your workplace.

Hazards from chemicals and other materials are everywhere we look-at work and at home. To protect yourself, you should know what type of exposure a particular chemical or material presents. Hazardous materials can be defined based upon their characteristics, physical hazards and health hazards. Examples of each follow:

#### **Physical Hazard Examples:**

**Explosives** - This product has the ability to quickly and violently release extraordinary amounts of energy through chemical reaction due to heat, shock or other source.

**Corrosives** - Corrosives can cause severe skin tissue damage such as deterioration and burns.

**Reactive** - Certain chemicals or materials react or change their properties or composition if exposed to other chemicals, products, or just air or water. Reaction can result in hazardous conditions or situations resulting in fire, explosions or the creation of other hazardous by-products.

**Flammable** - Items that catch fire easily are considered flammable. Generally speaking, a flammable product has a flashpoint of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

#### **Health Hazard Examples:**

**Toxic** - Toxic materials or chemicals are generally considered as poisons that can cause short-term or long-term sickness or death. Exposure can be through inhalation or direct physical contact. The degree of danger is dependent upon the level of exposure.

**Radioactive** - Exposure to harmful levels of ionizing radiation can cause adverse health effects. Biological damage to cell tissue can result from overexposure.

When the specific type of chemical or material hazard is identified, proper planning and precautions should be taken to prevent exposure and address emergencies. Precautions may include eliminating the hazard by not using it or by substituting a safer material. Avoidance of the hazard is a method to prevent exposure as is the use of physical barriers such as personal protective equipment (PPE). Emergency planning includes action plans for reporting, containing and disposing of chemical spills.

**If you are unsure of the hazards associate with the products you use:** Review the specific chemical Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), which describes the physical and health hazards, or ask your supervisor. Only when you identify hazards can proper precautions be taken to minimize exposure.