

# **Understanding Hazardous Chemical Labels**

This fact sheet provides information on how to understand the new labelling system for hazardous chemicals. By understanding and following all information and instructions on a chemical label, all chemicals should be able to be used safely in the Men's Shed.

#### What is a hazardous chemical label?

The label

- Is affixed to, printed on or attached to the container.
- Is also used on pipes and pipe-work used to transfer hazardous chemicals.
- Contains information on identity and proportions of the hazardous chemical and its constituents or ingredients.
- Contains information on the hazards of the chemical, precautions to be followed during its use, handling and storage, and instructions for the safe disposal of the chemical.

You should always read and understand the information on a label **before** using a hazardous chemical.

When using a hazardous chemical you should always refer to the chemical's *Safety Data Sheet (SDS)*, as this contains more detailed information.

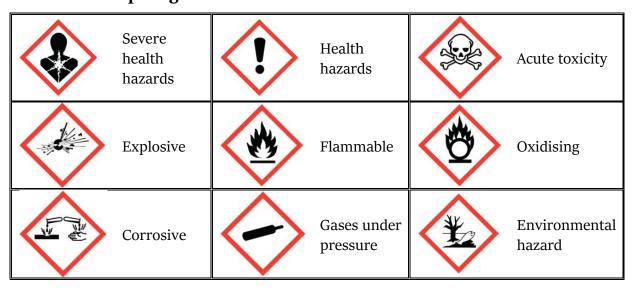
### What information should I look for in a label?

Labels will contain the following elements.

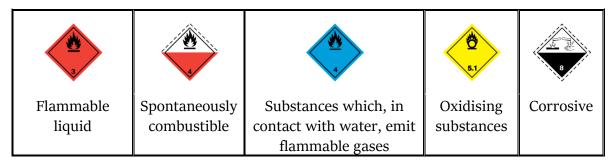
• **Pictograms** – these provide a graphical representation of the chemical's hazardous properties. These pictograms are designed to be easily recognised so you can instantly see the hazards associated with a chemical.

There are nine new pictograms, each with a specific meaning. The following table shows these new pictograms and the types of hazards they represent.

## **GHS** hazard pictograms



Dangerous goods class labels are those pictograms that are used on dangerous goods containers for their transport by road or rail. Some examples of dangerous goods class labels are shown below.

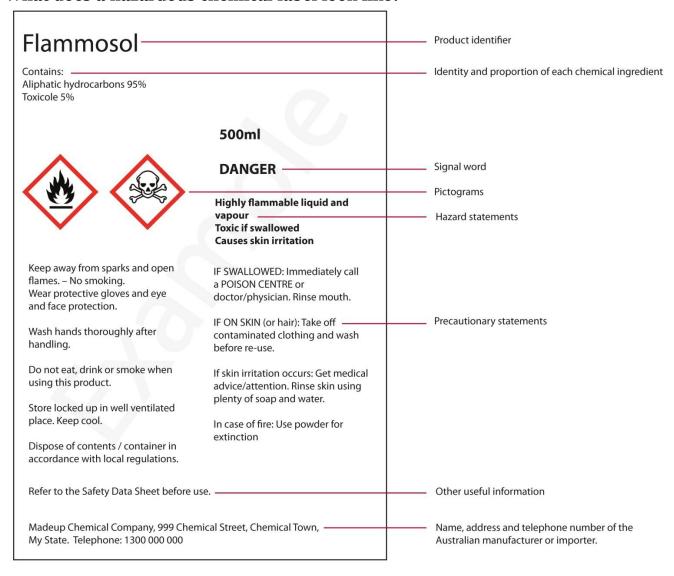


- **Signal words** these provide an indication of the relative severity of the hazard. The signal words used are **DANGER** or **WARNING**. Danger indicates a higher severity of hazard.
- **Hazard statements** these describe the nature and severity of the chemical hazard. Examples of hazard statements are:
  - Highly flammable liquid and vapour
  - May cause respiratory irritation
  - May cause cancer
  - Contains gas under pressure
  - Causes severe skin burns and eye damage
- **Precautionary statements** these describe some recommended measures that should be taken to minimise or eliminate risks during storage, handling, use or disposal of the hazardous chemical. The GHS uses four types of precautionary statement, covering
  - *Prevention* of an incident (for example how to prevent poisoning from a toxic chemical or igniting a flammable liquid)
  - *Response* in the event of an incident (for example providing first aid information if a worker is exposed or instructions to extinguish a fire)
  - *Storage* instructions (for example specific conditions under which the chemical should or should not be stored)
  - *Disposal* (for example referring to any applicable local/state regulations)

## **Examples** of precautionary statements are:

- Do not breath dust/fume/gas/mist/vapours/spray
- Keep away from heat/sparks/open flames/hot surfaces No smoking
- Get immediate medical advice/attention
- Dispose of contents in accordance with local Regulations

### What does a hazardous chemical label look like?



More information on labelling and other aspects of managing the risks associated with hazardous chemicals can be found on at <a href="https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au">www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au</a>.

This AMSA resource is based on information provided by

