

Cleaners' Safety Tip Sheet

A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the cleaning industry



Know your hazard symbols!

Summer 2024

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Hazard Communication Standard \(HCS\)](#) are warning symbols that are required on chemical product labels to help alert users to specific dangers. Different chemicals may have several different hazard symbols. Talk to your supervisor about what personal protective equipment you may need (like masks, gloves, or eye protection) – and how best to work safely. Here are some of the most common:



Skull and Crossbones

This picture means that this chemical can cause very severe and immediate harmful effects (acute toxicity), including death.



Flame

This picture means that a substance may cause or catch fire – it is flammable or may give off heat or flammable gas.



Human Health Hazard -

This picture means that a chemical may cause harm to your health, either over time or right away. This means it may cause cancer, hurt your ability to have children, or cause other toxic effects.



Corrosion

This picture means that a chemical can burn or damage your skin or eyes. These substances may cause chemical burns and damage metal.



Exclamation Mark

This picture means that a chemical may cause problems with your skin or breathing, or cause other serious side effects (some may develop over time). These chemicals are irritants or sensitizers.

For employees:

- Ask your supervisor for personal protective equipment.
- Tell your supervisor and seek medical care if you feel unwell after using chemicals at work

For Employers:

- Employers must maintain a written hazard communication program at each workplace. Employers must ensure that each container is labeled or marked appropriately, and provide employees with specific information on physical and health hazards from each hazardous chemical ([Chapter 296-901 WAC Safety Standards for Hazard Communication – L&I](#)).
- Chemical product labels should also include “precautionary statements” which are warnings and information on how to safely use and dispose of these chemicals, including steps to take to reduce any health risks.