

To: Biochemistry faculty and lab managers

Re: Workplace labels - IMPORTANT

From: David H. Heeley – Safety Officer

16th June 2010

Please be informed that it is now MANDATORY for a workplace label to be attached to a container with a regulated product inside.

Points to keep in mind are:

(1) We are legally obligated to properly label solutions and samples in accordance with Provincial law.

(2) Who is responsible for the proper labeling of regulated products within a given work area? The answer is: the corresponding faculty or lab manager.

(3) Many of the working solutions in our labs contain regulated products.

(4) EXEMPTIONS:

(i) The original chemical container (i.e. the one from the supplier) which comes with the required information on it.

(ii) Chemicals that are not WHMIS controlled. Examples include: glucose, L-amino acids, EDTA and EGTA and some (but not all) simple salts such as magnesium chloride. Whether or not a chemical is WHMIS controlled will be stated on the supplier Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

(iii) Solutions that are only intended for a single shift (defined as one working day), and are disposed of (correctly) at the end of the day.

(5) There are two types of labels (self-adhesive). Both are available from the department of Health and Safety at MUN. They are easily distinguished thus:

(A) Tricolour diamonds – blue (health), red (fire) and yellow (reactivity). Comes in different sizes, small, medium and large.

(B) Red striped-border.

Question: When do I use which label?

Choose the label that best fits the size of the container. Although Health and Safety recommend using the large version of **(A)** for 'large' sample volumes with an anticipated extended shelf life (e.g. a 20L carboy).

(6) **(A)** and **(B)** require different information.

A) Tricolour diamonds

Product identifier (i.e. the name of the chemical)

MSDS # Material safety data sheet

CAS # Chemical Abstracts Service

NFPA ratio National Fire Prevention Association

Information on safe handling (e.g. lab coat, gloves, goggles etc)

B) Red striped border

Simpler than (A). Requires the name of the chemical but not the MSDS and CAS numbers and NFPA ratio. However, there are several boxes to check.

(7) The necessary information that each type of label calls for is on the supplier MSDS that accompanies each purchase. It is also available from the web.

(8) One label per chemical. Yes! Don Wood (MUN, Health and Safety) has designed some smaller (blue/red/yellow) labels for test-tubes and vials. Even so the smaller labels may still be too big for our purposes.

Question: What to do if the vial is not large enough?

My suggestion is to prioritize the most dangerous chemical(s).

Question: What to do if I have scores or hundreds of vials?

If the contents are identical, one label 'covers all'. Simply apply the label to the tray or box etc.

Question: Is there a concentration cut-off ? The answer is: no.

[Federal and provincial regulations currently differ on this point. In our jurisdiction we are required to follow provincial regulations and label all controlled substances (except for #4) regardless of the concentration.]

David Heeley – Safety Officer.