

Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety Unit

OHS ALERT

Hazardous Materials

Know what you're working with...

A recent report from WorkSafe Australia highlights that construction workers are continually being exposed, often unknowingly, to many hazardous and cancer-causing chemicals and materials. This is a major concern and needs to stop.

It is a mandatory and legal requirement for an "approved" Material Safety Data Sheet to be provided to workers, prior to using any substance or material that could cause harm to any worker – regardless of what you're "told" by the boss.

Such substances or materials can include, but are in no way limited to the following examples:

- Insulation;
- Adhesives and/or glues;
- Paints;
- Cleaning chemicals
- Timber Panels;
- Besser Blocks;

In fact, any material that can generate or result in the release of dusts, fumes, fibres, smoke, mists, gas, vapours and the like, via the work process of installing,

removing or "maintaining" the product, must have a MSDS supplied. This is so we all know what we are working with and potentially being exposed to – and the best way to prevent such exposure from occurring.

The best way is to eliminate and / or substitute the product – if it is really bad, for a far less hazardous product – but all that depends upon what the product is made up of. And we can only find that out, with an approved MSDS. An MSDS which meets all the requirements under the OHS Regulations [2007] – Part 4 Hazardous Substances.

If you are in any doubt at all – contact the CFMEU OHS UNIT, your OHS Rep and/or your CFMEU Organiser for the right information. It's your health and safety, and it's your right to be safe and healthy at work.

Remember Safety is Union Business!

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STAND UP. SPEAK OUT. COME HOME.