VCSU SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES:
Hazard Communication

Background:
Information concerning identified hazards and appropriate hazard control mechanisms must be provided to individual employees who work with hazardous chemicals. A written Hazard Communication Program will ensure that all Valley City State University employees are informed and meet OSHA standards concerning potential chemical hazards. Please note that separate regulations exist for use of hazardous chemicals in laboratories. For more information, refer to “Lab Safety” Safe Operating Procedure.

Purpose:
To provide means of informing employees of potential chemical hazards.

Responsibilities:
Department heads, Directors, and Managers are responsible for the implementation of this program in their departments and making sure that all employees are trained in all aspects of hazard communication.

The Safety Office is responsible for maintaining the central SDS database for the campus and auditing for compliance with this program.

Employees are responsible for following the requirements of this program and reporting any problems to their Supervisor.

Procedures:

Safety Data Sheets
Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are prepared and distributed by manufacturers and distributors of hazardous materials. All chemical manufacturers and distributors must obtain or develop an SDS for each hazardous material they produce or import.

The University must retain a copy of the SDS for each hazardous chemical being imported on campus. Each SDS will be entered into the central database by the Safety Office and will serve as a list of hazardous materials present on the VCSU campus. Departments should submit all new SDS sheets to the Safety Office in order to maintain an updated inventory list. SDS sheets from the central database are available to employees when requested. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to inform employees where the SDS information is stored in their area and to keep an updated SDS binder.

Labeling
Materials that are known to be hazardous must be labeled as such; identification includes the following information:

- Identify the hazardous chemical (secondary containers must also contain this information).
• Appropriate hazard warnings (secondary containers must also contain this information).
• If a label is removed, defaced, or covered, it should be reported to the Supervisor immediately so a new label can be reapplied.

No department or employee should use or store hazardous chemical in a University building if the container does not meet the labeling requirements. The label should be legible, permanently displayed, and written in English. Departments are responsible for maintaining a proper labeling system and for maintaining an inventory list for the hazardous chemicals in their work area(s).

Training
The University will provide training to all employees in positions where there is exposure to hazardous chemicals. This training includes information about hazardous materials and procedures in the workplace. The Safety Office will provide general information on basic hazard communication (SDS, labeling, signage, and emergency procedures. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to provide additional information pertaining to the specific position. Additional information may include:

• Operation in their work areas where hazardous chemicals are present.
• Physical, health, and other specific hazards of the chemicals in their work area.
• SDSs and their location; access to information on hazardous chemicals.
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• Protective measures each employee can take to protect themselves, including department procedures and personal protective equipment requirements.

Retraining on Hazard Communications material will be required when:

• New materials or processes are introduced.
• Process or workplace practices are introduced or changed, which could cause a change in an employee’s exposure.
• Personnel are transferred from one work area to anther where different hazards are present.

General Safety Practices
General safety practices are important to follow when working with hazardous materials- no matter what position you hold within the University:

• Read and understand the Safety Data Sheets.
• Substitute less toxic materials when possible.
• Do not underestimate the risks of hazardous materials.
• Limit the volume of hazardous materials to only what is needed for the operation.
• Keep incompatible materials segregated.
• Use appropriate safety equipment (including personal protective equipment).
• Avoid ingestion (do not eat, drink, or apply cosmetics in areas where hazardous materials are used). Wash hands with soap and water immediately after working with hazardous materials, even if gloves have been worn).
• Do not deface labels and hazard warnings placed on containers by the manufacturer.
• Label all containers that have hazardous materials transferred into them with all the required information.
• Be prepared for accidents. Know what action to take, how to warn others, and the location of safety equipment in case of accidental release of hazardous materials occurs.

**Contractors**
Contractors are required to keep SDSs on-site for any hazardous chemicals brought onto University property and comply with OSHA regulations while working on University property. VCSU employees who are involved in coordinating the work activity are responsible for retaining the necessary information.

**Emergency Response to Hazardous Chemical Exposure**

• Identify the hazardous material.
• Consult the SDS for emergency response procedures.
• Call 911 when the situation poses immediate danger to people, property, or process.
• Notify others in the area that a release has occurred.
• Evacuate the area if necessary.
• Attend to injured and exposed individuals.