Safety Data Sheet Fatality File



As a safety professional, Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) have always been a close, professional friend. They are scientific, clear, help you make decisions, and provide vital contextual clarity in emergency situations. I've also found them useful for explaining my work to non-safety professionals.

Two stories come to mind for me…

An agriculture employee was tasked with baiting rodent traps outside a building. The employee, a smoker, decided to have a cigarette immediately after handling poisonous bait. The employee did not wear the prescribed personal protective equipment (PPE) on his hands, nor did he wash his hands after handling the bait. The act of smoking, combined with harmful bait residue, made the employee sick; poisonous chemicals from the bait entered his body through the cigarette. As a safety professional, I needed to provide the SDS for the rodent bait to the urgent care physician, so they would know how to treat his specific exposure.

An agriculture worker was vaccinating an animal when he inadvertently stuck himself with the vaccination needle. The SDS clearly stated that exposure required a certain post-exposure medication and consultation with a hand surgeon, if the needle stuck in a digit. That's information attending medical professionals and employees must have.

Section 4 of any Safety Data Sheet outlines treatment protocol for exposures. Section 7 provides guidance on safe handling practices. Section 8 covers PPE measures.