

YOU HAVE THE **RIGHT TO KNOW**



ABOUT HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES IN YOUR WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY



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EOHAP

THE **RIGHT TO KNOW** ACT

The New Jersey Worker and Community *Right to Know* Act requires public and private employers to provide information about hazardous substances at their workplaces. The Act:

- informs public employees about chemical hazards at their workplace so they can work safely with these hazardous substances;
- helps firefighters, police, and other emergency responders adequately plan for and respond to incidents such as fires, explosions or spills;
- provides data for monitoring and tracking hazardous substances in the workplace and the environment.

HOW THE ACT CAN PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Harmful substances may be present at your workplace and at other workplaces in your community, or may be released into the environment. They may also be carried home to your family on your work clothes.

Hazardous substances can cause irritation to the eyes, skin, and respiratory tract. Exposure to hazardous substances has been linked to health problems such as cancer, birth defects, and heart, lung and kidney diseases. These diseases may develop many years after exposure. *As a public employee, you can obtain information about hazardous substances that may harm you or your family from documents in your workplace's **Right to Know (RTK)** central file.*

Knowing about hazardous substances and how they harm you can help you obtain the proper diagnosis and treatment if you should become sick. More importantly, awareness about hazardous substances and your potential exposure to them can help you make important decisions about your employment.

HOW THE ACT WORKS

Employers covered by the Act must complete surveys listing the names and amounts of hazardous chemicals stored and used at their workplaces.

Right to Know Surveys are completed by public agencies and sent to the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH).

Community Right to Know Surveys are completed by private employers and sent to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

*Copies of these surveys are required to be sent to local fire and police departments, designated **Right to Know** county agencies (mostly county health departments), and local emergency planning committees.*

Public employers are required to label containers according to the New Jersey *Right to Know* Act and PEOSHA¹, and maintain a *RTK* Central File that contains information about hazardous substances at their facilities. Private employers are required to label containers according to OSHA² and the New Jersey *Right to Know* Act.

HOW PUBLIC EMPLOYERS COMPLY WITH THE **RIGHT TO KNOW** ACT

Public employers have the responsibility to assist workers in learning about the hazards of the products they work with. The employer must:

- ✓ Complete the *Right to Know Survey*
- ✓ Label Containers
- ✓ Create and Maintain a *Right to Know* Central File
- ✓ Post the *Right to Know* Poster

Public employees can obtain a copy of the survey by contacting their employer, the NJDOH, or the designated county agencies at the numbers listed in this brochure.

1. PEOSHA is the Public Employees' Occupational Safety and Health Act
2. OSHA is the Occupational Safety and Health Act

HOW TO USE YOUR WORKPLACE RIGHTS TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

The *Right to Know* Act gives employees certain rights and access to information about hazardous chemicals in their workplace. This information, kept in the *RTK* central file, informs workers about the health hazards of chemicals and ways to reduce or prevent their exposure to the chemical hazards. *Learn to work safely with chemical hazards to protect your health and the health of your family members.* To do so:

1. Work only with labeled containers.
2. Check your workplace *RTK* Survey to find out which products contain hazardous chemicals.
3. Read Material Safety Data Sheets and Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets about the health hazards of the hazardous chemicals in the products. These documents are kept in the *RTK* central file.

You do not have to work with a product if your employer has not given you the ingredient information you requested in writing within five working days. **Call the NJDOH** for more information **before** you refuse to work with a product.

You can file a complaint against your employer for not complying with the *RTK* Act. Your **name will be kept confidential.**

This brochure is being distributed to you as part of your training about hazardous chemicals in the workplace under the PEOSH Hazard Communication Standard. For more information about training, contact Environmental, Occupational Health Assessment Program (EOHAP), New Jersey Department of Health, PO Box 369, Trenton, NJ 08625-0369, (609) 984-1863, www.nj.gov/health/eoh/peoshweb.

The following three agencies work together to implement the *Worker and Community Right to Know (RTK)* Act:

New Jersey Department of Health
EOHAP
PO Box 368
Trenton, NJ 08625-0368
(609) 984-2202
www.nj.gov/health/rtkweb

Enforces all provisions of the *RTK* Act in public workplaces and *RTK* labeling in private workplaces. The Program prepares Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets, the *RTK* brochure, and other materials to increase awareness of hazardous chemicals and help employers comply with the *RTK* Act. Printed materials are available upon request. Many are translated into Spanish.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Pollution Prevention and *Right to Know*
MC 22-03C, PO Box 420,
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
(609) 292-6714
www.nj.gov/dep/opppc/crtk/

Enforces the community provisions of the *RTK* Act in the private sector (except for labeling). The Department is also responsible for implementing Title III (Emergency Planning and *Community Right to Know*) of the federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), which establishes requirements for industry regarding emergency planning and reporting of hazardous chemicals.

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Office of Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health
PO Box 386
Trenton, NJ 08625-0386
(609) 292-7036

http://lwd.state.nj.us/lsse/employer/Public_Employees_OSH.html

Collects *RTK* fees from private employers and investigates complaints by public employees who suspect they are being discriminated against for exercising their rights under the *RTK* Act.

HOW TO OBTAIN INFORMATION LOCALLY

You can obtain copies of the *Right to Know Survey*, *Community Right to Know Survey*, and Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets from your designated *Right to Know* county agency listed below:

Atlantic.....	(609) 645-5971	Ext. 4376
Bergen.....	(201) 634-2785	
Burlington.....	(609) 265-5521	Ext. 5521
Camden.....	(856) 374-6051	
Cape May.....	(609) 465-1217	
Cumberland.....	(856) 327-7602	Ext. 7129
Essex.....	(973) 497-9401	
Gloucester.....	(856) 218-4103	
Hudson.....	(201) 223-1133	
Hunterdon.....	(908) 788-1110	
Mercer.....	(609) 278-7165	
Middlesex.....	(732) 745-8480	
Monmouth.....	(732) 431-7456	
Morris.....	(973) 631-5492	
Ocean.....	(732) 341-9700	Ext. 7471
Passaic.....	(973) 225-3651	
Salem.....	(856) 935-7510	Ext. 8489
Somerset.....	(908) 231-7506	
Sussex.....	(973) 579-0370	
Union.....	(908) 654-9730	
Warren.....	(908) 475-7960	

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