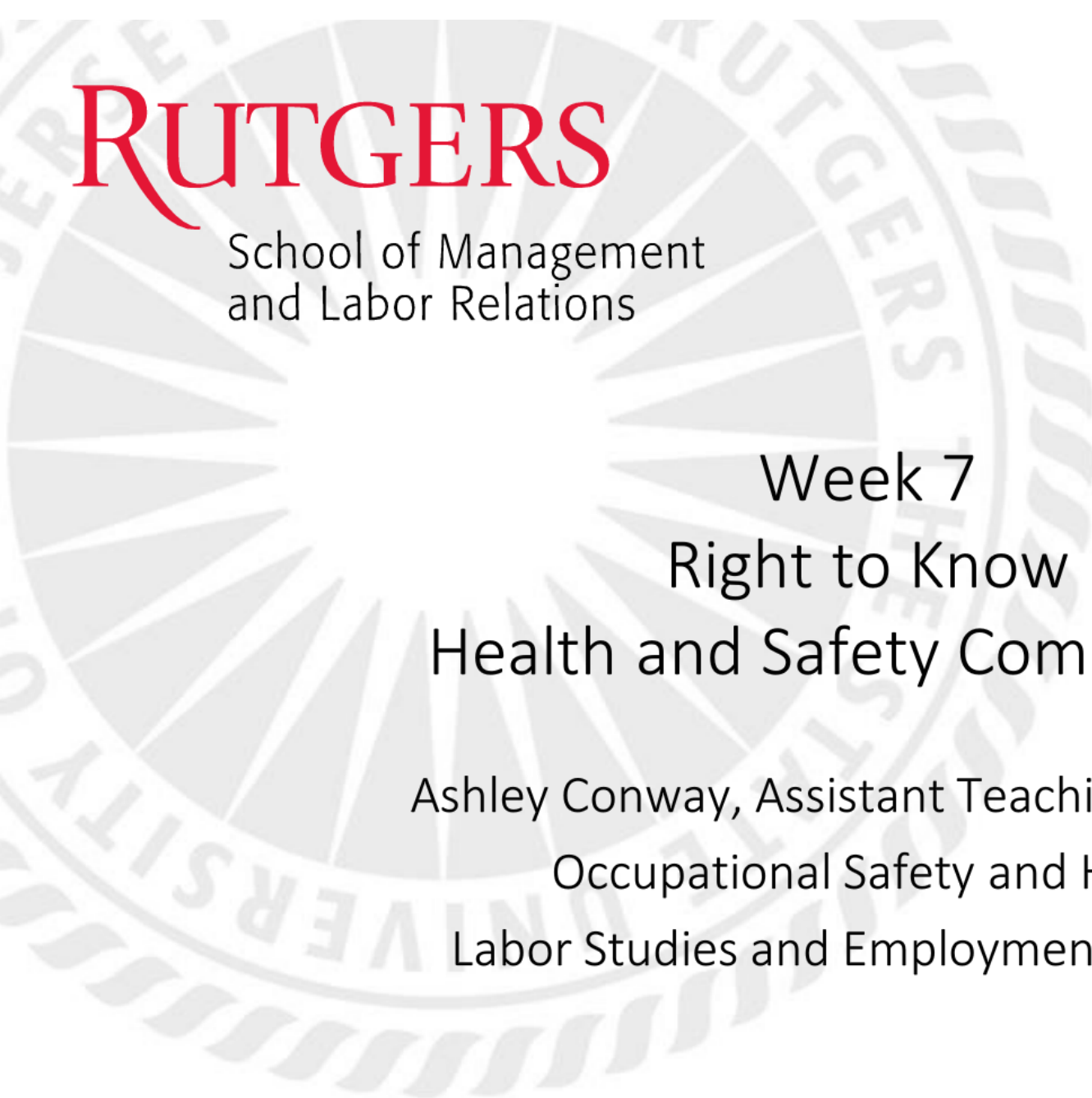


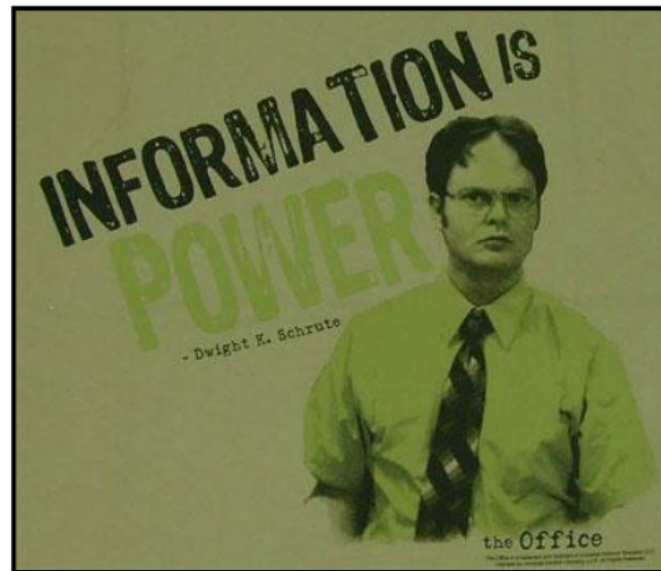
The background of the slide features a large, faint, circular seal of Rutgers University. The seal contains the text "RUTGERS UNIVERSITY" and "EST. 1823" around a central emblem.

RUTGERS

School of Management
and Labor Relations

Week 7
Right to Know
Health and Safety Committees

Ashley Conway, Assistant Teaching Professor
Occupational Safety and Health
Labor Studies and Employment Relations



From your study of W.R.Grace, diacetyl, and McWane you have learned how important access to information is in identifying and controlling occupational hazards. This week, we will take a closer look at the power of information. Like many OSH issues, who owns it, how to get it, what can be done with it is controversial.

Every profession has at its center an impulse to hoard power, and to resist attempts to usurp that power.

- Vincent Covello and Peter Sandman

Types of Information

Public Sector
Information(from Local, State or
Federal Governments)Private Sector
Information(from Privately Owned
Companies and Corporations)Citizen Generated
Information

Read “Whistleblowers’ Tightrope”



a link is on the Week 7 page



In case you missed it: the exam alert icon means that a question from this content is frequently missed

Historically, information has been controlled by the public and private sectors and parceled out to citizens when useful or when political and public pressure demanded. This includes information about workplace and environmental hazards.

Using a public health approach to hazards, information about a hazard – even a potential hazard, such as a new chemical substance - should be available to anyone who may be affected by it. For instance workers who manufacture, transport, or use a chemical need information about it, as does the community affected by its manufacture or use. Local first responders and Haz Mat (hazardous materials) crews need to know what chemical is being transported in order to respond to an incident such as an overturned tanker truck. As you have learned, public health is built on the principle of prevention. Whenever possible, prevention measures should be taken before people are made sick or die from a hazard. Having information is needed in order to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

As we looked at in Week 2, at the turn of the 20th Century, periodicals became widely available to people due to technological advances that made printing faster and cheaper. Workplace reformers used the media to inform readers about workplace tragedies and deplorable working conditions. Over time, creating public outrage contributed to gradual health and safety reform and legislative protections for workers.

How did the investigative journalists in the early 20th Century get information? Probably not easily! Before WWII, information was controlled largely by the private sector and government. Certainly, workers themselves contributed important information to reporters, and as happens now and there where sometimes whistle blowers who disclosed what occurred behind workplace doors. Mostly, reporters had to snoop, sleuth and investigate to get the information they needed. Although they could request information from the government, there was no law in place requiring government agencies to comply with requests for information.

Read the interview with Robert Rester, a McWane whistle blower, on the Week 7 page in on Canvas. Rester relates his story of what happened to him after he testified against the company.

The role of whistle blowers and their protection is currently the hot topic in the news. Keep an eye out for this issue and how it plays out - for the whistle blower, those who stand to lose or gain from their testimony, and the nation.



FOIA allows for the full or partial disclosure of information and documents controlled by the US Government. The Act defines agency records subject to disclosure, outlines mandatory disclosure procedures and grants nine exemptions to the statute.

- President Johnson signs FOIA into law in 1966.
- President Ford vetoes Privacy Act of 1974, but passed by Congress.
- President Reagan curtails FOIA by expanding exemptions 1982 -1994.
- President Clinton expands FOIA 1995 – 1999.
- President Bush issues executive order limiting FOIA post-9/11.
- President Obama issues memos supporting transparent and open government and instructing agencies to comply with FOIA .

- George Washington University

Most recently, under President Trump's administration the federal government censored, withheld or said it couldn't find records sought by citizens, journalists and others more often last year (2017) than at any point in the past decade, according to an Associated Press analysis of new data

The 1950's and 1960's were times of social upheaval and cultural shifts in America. In the shadows of the McCarthy hearings and Cold War rhetoric, a generation of "baby-boomers" grew up to challenge the status quo and to "question authority" (a favorite slogan on buttons and t-shirts in the '60s). Riding the wave of successes of the Civil Rights Movement, the 1960's created a demand for a more transparent and open government. This demand by citizens of their government was met with government resistance and road-blocks but eventually saw the passage of the Freedom of Information Act – known as FOIA.

A chronological overview of FOIA:

- A Democratic congressman from Sacramento, California, John Moss, is central to the Freedom of Information story. Supported by extensive press coverage and active lobbying by newspaper editors, Moss led hearings beginning in 1955 that documented and denounced excessive government secrecy.
- President Johnson signed FOIA only after numerous changes were made to clarify exemptions, plus a lot of lobbying on the part of people inside and outside of his administration. Bill Moyers was Johnson's aide at the time and said that, "I knew that LBJ had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the signing... He hated the very idea of the Freedom of Information Act; hated the thought of journalists rummaging in government closets and opening government files; hated them challenging the official view of reality."
- President Ford's efforts to strengthen FOIA post-Watergate were resisted by his advisors Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Antonin Scalia and he ultimately vetoed it. However, an amendment to FOIA was passed by Congress and allows for a person to see records about him or her self and to add amendments to those records if they are inaccurate.
- A Bush executive order limited what information must be released under FOIA for former presidents and was drafted by Alberto Gonzales.
- President Obama's memo to all government agencies directs that they adopt a presumption in favor of disclosure in administering FOIA requests and process those requests in a timely manner.

Why do you think administrations since the 1950's felt so strongly about the FOIA Act?

The next frame contains some key FOIA facts and the following contains 3 brief videos on FOIA produced by the Justice Department.



Some FOIA facts

- FOIA applies only to federal government agencies.
- Agencies are subject to penalties for hindering the process of petitioning for information.
- If an agency is suspected of tampering with or delaying sending of records the entity requesting the information can go to a Federal Court for recourse.
- Currently, there are nine exemptions to what must be disclosed under the Act. The President has unlimited authority to declare information off-limits or classified in concern for national security.



U.S. Justice Department. What is FOIA? (0:41)



How do I make a FOIA request? (0:44)



What are exemptions? (0:44)

“Right to Know” is a legal principle that an individual has the right to know the chemicals he or she may be exposed to in daily life.



Information found at the workplace or in state/federal agencies with workplace jurisdiction:

- Injury and illness records which most employers are required to keep
- Accident investigation reports
- Workers' compensation claim forms and records.
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and labels for hazardous chemicals used or present in the workplace
- Chemical inventories required by federal and state regulations
- Records of monitoring and measurement of worker exposure to chemicals, noise, radiation, or other hazards
- Workplace inspection reports, whether done by a safety committee, employer safety and health personnel, insurance carriers, fire departments, or other outside agencies.
- Job safety analysis, including ergonomic evaluations of jobs or workstations.
- Employee medical records or studies or evaluations based on these records.
- OSHA standards and the background data on which they are based.

In the early years following the formation of OSHA, rules and regulations regarding workers' right to know about the substances they were exposed to in the workplace were weak.

The “Right to Know” (you may see it referred to as RTK) movement began in the late 1970's as unions and workers demanded information about what hazards they were being exposed to, what harm the substances could cause, and what could prevent harm from occurring. Backed by labor, the movement gained momentum and spread to community-based organizations and citizens who wanted the same kind of information about the environment they lived in. Citizens increasingly demanded to know what was being released into the air they breathed and the water they drank. Even citizens who have no stake in workplace health and safety become interested and often engaged if their own health, the health of their families, or the value of their property is jeopardized.

Mandated by OSHA, Workplace Right to Know gives employees a right to learn about chemical hazards in the workplace and how to work safely with these materials. The law requires employers to prepare a list of all hazardous and toxic substances used in the workplace and to obtain Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for these substances. Employers must also label or otherwise identify containers of hazardous chemicals. Employees must be told how to obtain information about the hazardous substances in their workplaces and must be provided proper training in the safe use of these materials.

Chemical information is most frequently associated with Right to Know but there are other types of information important to workplace safety and health.

Two fundamental concepts are considered essential to making significant progress in health standards:

- 1) Identification of hazardous substances in the workplace, and in the environment surrounding the factory
- 2) Education of employees and employers



+



- Eula Bingham

Common arguments for opposing Right to Know laws:

- Laws are a reporting burden on industry
- Laws reveal trade secrets
- Laws inform terrorists
- Only perfect data should be released
- People will draw false conclusions
- Laws will cause unnecessary worry and fear
- Laws are not strong enough to change anything

- Morse

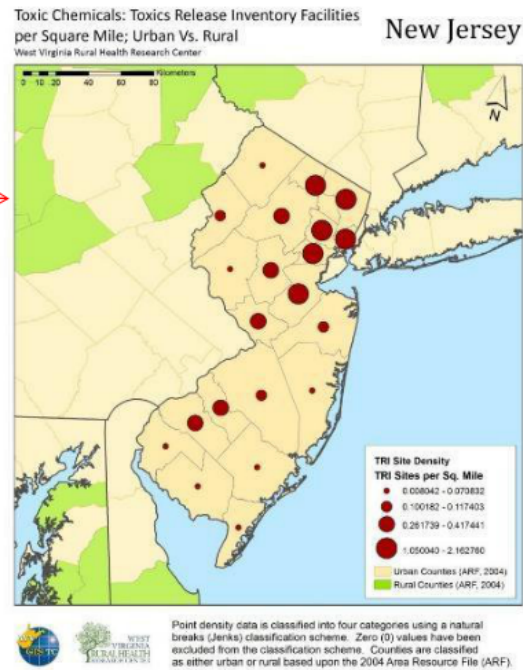
Historically, the passing of community and workplace Right to Know laws were opposed by industry and business. This opposition continues today, often in the form of attempts to discredit scientific concerns about chemical substances by labeling those concerns “junk science” (Michaels & Monforton). The reasons most frequently cited for opposing Right to Know laws are listed in the slide.

Think[!]about It

Do you think these arguments are legitimate reasons to oppose greater access to information? How would your views change if you were an employee working with a harmful chemical? Would your views change if you were an employer manufacturing or using the chemical?

Examples of Right to Know Initiatives

- Lead Paint Right to Know
- Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) →
- Materials Accounting
- Worker Right to Know
- Community Right to Know



Examples of Right to Know Initiatives:

Lead Paint – Under the Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act, sellers and renters must inform buyers and renters about known lead paint hazards in properties. However, if they do not know of existing hazards, they are not obligated to find out.

Toxic Release Inventory – US online federal environmental dataset providing organized public information on industrial chemical waste and pollution. However, many chemicals are not covered and small firms/industries are exempt. Read the article in the next frame about New Jersey's TRI system.

Materials Accounting – Two states require many high-volume toxic chemical users to compute and report their use and release of toxic chemicals. This accounting is used for planning and technical assistance in pollution prevention programs.

Workplace Right to Know - Mandated by OSHA through the Hazard Communications Act.

Community Right to Know - Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 is a United States law. Its purpose is to encourage and support emergency planning efforts at the state and local levels and to provide the public and local governments with information concerning potential chemical hazards present in their communities.

The next frame is a press release about the impact the TRI initiative has had in New Jersey and the following slide introduces you to a cool tool called TOXMAP.

**Environmental Protection Agency
Toxics Release Inventory Shows Progress in New Jersey**

Release date: 03/19/2009

Contact Information: Elias Rodriguez (212) 637-3664, rodriguez.elias@epa.gov

Read about TRI in New Jersey

(New York, N.Y.) What if you wanted to know how many pounds of toxic air pollutants were being generated by your local power plant? Or how many pounds of toxic chemicals were being released by a factory near your child's school? The latest Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) report issued today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can help answer these questions. It finds a decrease in releases to the air and water in New Jersey. EPA's database provides the most recent information available about the amount of toxic chemicals released into the environment of New Jersey by permitted industrial and other facilities. Since 1988, TRI data has been released to the public annually to help people learn more about the chemicals present in their local environment and gauge environmental trends over time.

"Overall TRI trends show that companies have significantly reduced the amount of toxic chemicals they're using and releasing over the last decade," said George Pavlou, Acting EPA Regional Administrator. "By issuing TRI data, EPA is empowering the public. People become aware of what is happening in their own backyards, businesses become more sensitive about how much they use and release into the environment, and governments get to know where to focus their local efforts."

The latest TRI report, which displays calendar year 2007 data gathered by EPA, shows a decrease in total on-site releases to the air, water and land of 6% in N.J. and a 21% decrease in releases to the Garden State's air. In part, this improvement is due to EPA's prior enforcement action at the PSEG Hudson County power plant, which reduced its toxic chemicals release by 1.5 million pounds in 2007. On the other hand, the N.J. data did show a 21% increase in nitrate compounds discharged into the waterways in water.

TRI is the most comprehensive inventory of information about chemicals released into the environment reported annually by certain industries and federal facilities. These facilities are permitted under strict federal regulations and required to install and maintain pollution controls. On a national level over 21,000 facilities reported on approximately 650 chemicals for calendar year 2007. TRI allows the public to see which facilities are increasing and decreasing their output of toxic chemicals and compounds, so that stakeholders are well informed about chemicals released into their communities, and industries can gauge their progress in reducing pollution. Thanks to improvements in EPA's system, the vast majority of facilities now report data electronically and detailed information about specific facilities is more readily accessible to the public.

Today's data is released according to the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act of 1986 and its amendments, as well as the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, and it includes toxics released at company facilities and those transported to disposal facilities off site. All manufacturing companies, as well as coal and oil fired power plants, that produce or use above the threshold limit for any chemical are required to participate. The data are collected from industries that are in the following sectors: manufacturing, metal and coal mining, electric utilities, commercial hazardous waste treatment, chemical distributors, solvent recyclers and petroleum bulk storage as well as federal facilities.

TRI provides the amount, location and type of release to the environment -- whether a pollutant is emitted into the air, discharged into the water, or released onto the land. Additionally, TRI has been credited with providing communities with vital local knowledge and encouraging facilities to reduce their releases of toxic chemicals into the environment through source reduction or pollution prevention measures

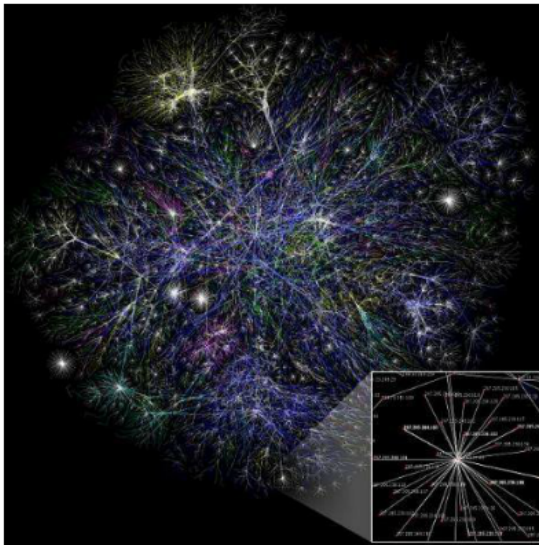
Check out your neighborhood!

U.S. NLM (National Library of Medicine) TOXMAP website:

Check out the U.S. NLM (National Library of Medicine) TOXMAP site at:
<http://toxmap.nlm.nih.gov/toxmap/main/startOver.do>

- What do you notice about New Jersey on the US map?
- You can take the 12 minute tour of TOXMAP at:
<http://toxmap.nlm.nih.gov/toxmap/tour/misc/ToxmapBasics.html>
- You can find your city on TOXMAP and learn what toxic releases have occurred and if you live near a Superfund site.

This is optional – but fun (in a scary kind of way)



Over 73% of US households have access to a computer and broadband connection to the internet. This fact has changed the face of information exchange. In the past, only large companies, governments, and universities were able to reuse and recombine information. Now the ability to “mix and mash” data is far more widely available. The largest websites are now those that bring together information created by the people who use them. The proportion of people who use such sites is on a par with people who were part of the mutual aid societies of the 19th century - the precursors to modern unions.

When enough people can collect, re-use, and distribute information people will organize around it in new ways. They create new enterprises and new communities designed to offer new ways to solve old problems. For instance, in the past the Toxic Release Inventory data would have been accessible and meaningful to a relative handful of users but now (perhaps with technical assistance) the information is visible and available to most people who want it.

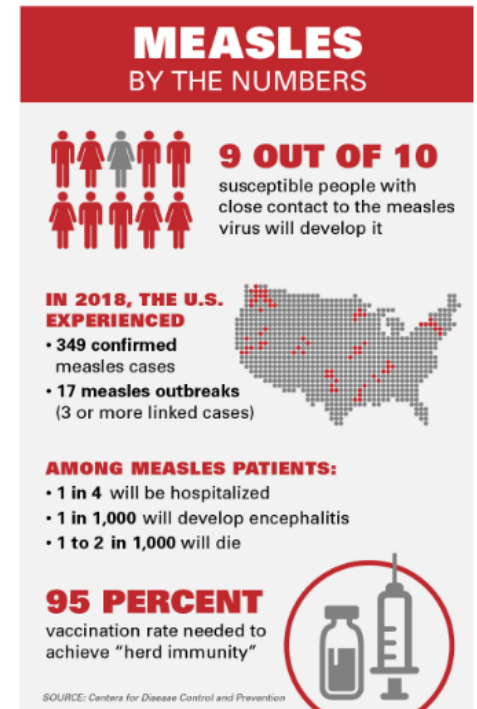
Is the amount of information available to the public a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

from my perspective

From my perspective as a public health professional, the ability to reach people and share information is a valuable tool, particularly in an emergency or crisis. However, the dissemination of inaccurate or false information is the stuff of public health nightmares! For instance, the discredited and patently false information that vaccines are harmful has a very small, but very internet savvy following that has scared some people. This is causing the rate of vaccination against preventable childhood diseases, like measles, mumps and polio, to decline to levels that will allow outbreaks to occur. Major outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases that were non-existent a decade ago have become frequent occurrences since the disinformation campaign began.

Optional: If you are interested in learning more about how disinformation spreads, this article from the American Journal of Public Health outlines how "bots that spread malware and unsolicited content disseminated antivaccine messages". <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304567>

Being a wary and discerning consumer of information, particularly when the source is the internet, is a skill that university students can cultivate and practice. For some tips on how to "think like a journalist" and become a good judge of information validity, see the "Know Your Sources" page in Modules - Week 7.





Hazard Communication Standard Pictogram

As of June 1, 2015, the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) will require pictograms on labels to alert users of the chemical hazards to which they may be exposed. Each pictogram consists of a symbol on a white background framed within a red border and represents a distinct hazard(s). The pictogram on the label is determined by the chemical hazard classification.

HCS Pictograms and Hazards

Health Hazard • Carcinogen • Mutagenicity • Reproductive Toxicity • Respiratory Sensitizer • Target Organ Toxicity • Aspiration Toxicity	Flame • Flammable • Pyrophoric • Self-Heating • Easily Flammable Gas • Self-Reactives • Organic Peroxides	Exclamation Mark • Irritant (skin and eye) • Skin Sensitizer • Acute Toxicity • Narcotic Effects • Respiratory Tract Irritant • Hazardous to Ozone Layer (Non-Mandatory)
Gas Cylinder • Gases Under Pressure	Corrosion • Skin Corrosion/Burns • Eye Damage • Corrosive to Metals	Exploding Bomb • Explosives • Self-Reactives • Organic Peroxides
Flame Over Circle • Oxidizers	Environment (Non-Mandatory) • Aquatic Toxicity	Skull and Crossbones • Acute Toxicity (fatal or toxic)

For more information:

 Occupational Safety and Health Administration
 U.S. Department of Labor
 (202) 455-6000 (HKS) 215-0914 (6742)

GHS – Hazard Pictograms and correlated exemplary Hazard Classes				
Physical Hazards				
Explosives	Flammable Liquids	Oxidizing Liquids	Compressed Gases	Corrosive to Metals
Health Hazards		Env. Hazards		
Acute Toxicity	Skin Corrosion	Skin Irritation	CMR ¹ , STOT ² , Aspiration Hazard	Hazardous to the Aquatic Environment

¹) carcinogenic, germ cell mutagenic, toxic to reproduction / ²) specific target organ toxicity

How is information about a hazard communicated? One system used is the Hazard Communication Standard. This law went into effect in 1985. It is an OSHA regulation that superseded state Right to Know laws that had been enacted. Mineworkers received protection under the Hazard Communication Standard in 2002.

Why do you think that federal standards for communicating information about hazards replaced the states' standards? Because in commerce, state boundaries are necessarily porous and criss-crossed millions of times it makes sense to have a system of communicating about hazards that is standardized throughout the US.

The Hazard Communication Standard requires:

- chemical manufacturers and importers to evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import
- prepare labels and safety data sheets (SDS) to convey the hazard information to their downstream customers
- all employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces must have labels and SDSs for their exposed workers, and train them to handle the chemicals appropriately

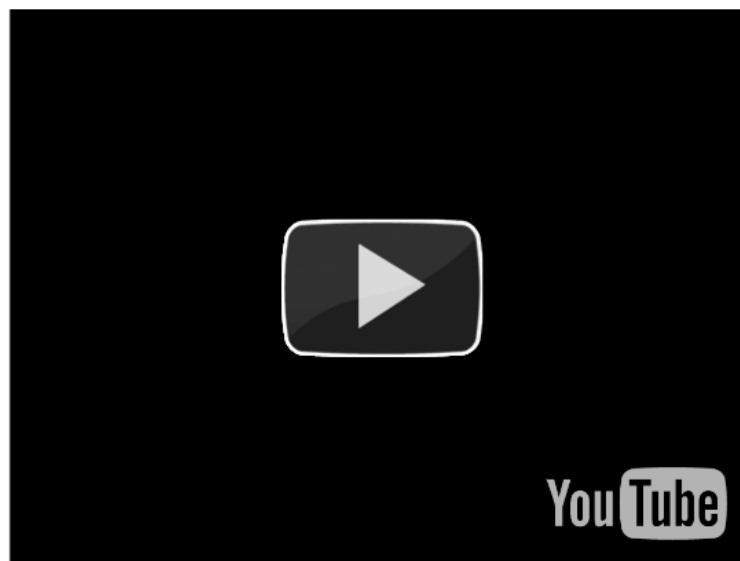
But how are hazards communicated about in a globalized economy where the borders of counties and even continents are routinely crossed? This is where the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) comes in.

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) is an internationally agreed-upon system, created by the United Nations. It is designed to replace the various classification and labeling standards used in different countries by using consistent criteria for classification and labeling on a global level.

GHS is an update to the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) and is intended to provide a common and coherent approach to classifying chemicals and communicating hazard information on labels and safety data sheets. This update is also intended to help reduce trade barriers and result in productivity improvements for American businesses that regularly handle, store, and use hazardous chemicals.

Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS)

WATCH
THE VIDEO



David Michaels served as the Assistant Secretary of Labor under President Obama. In this role Michaels was also the head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

U.S. Dept. of Labor. (2012) David Michael*, U.S. Asst. Sec. of Labor & Director of OSHA: OSHA Revised Hazard Communication Standard. (5:41)

From MDS (Material Safety Data Sheets)



SDS (Safety Data Sheets)



Let's move from thinking globally to thinking locally.

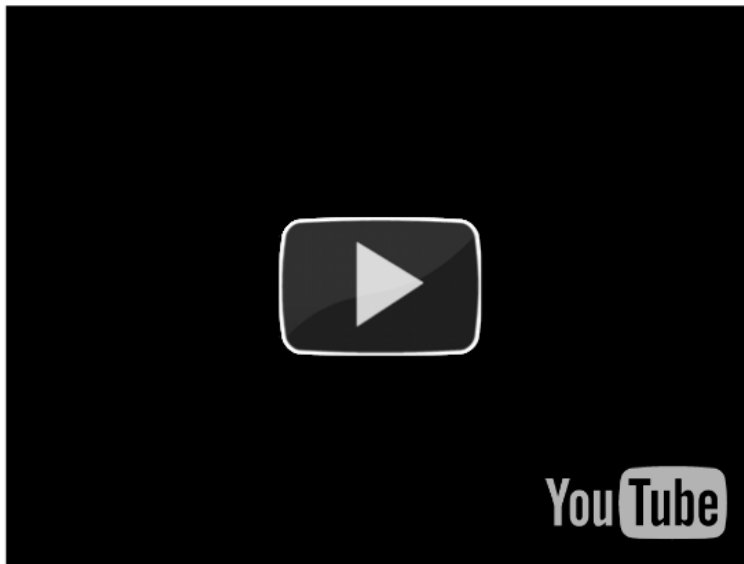
How do workers in a factory, plant or office access information about hazardous substances in their workplace?

Some of you may have used MSDS (material safety data sheets) in your workplaces or at least seen them. The requirement that manufacturers and distributors provide MSDS sheets to their customers became effective in 1985 as part of the Hazard Communications Standards as you learned in a previous slide. The standard did not require a particular format for the MSDS, but did specify what information had to be included.

Material Safety Data Sheets were often hard to figure out, even for trained safety professionals. The creators of the MSDS sheets tended to use the "kitchen sink" approach and include more information that was desirable in an attempt to minimize their perceived liability. Additionally, the MSDS sheets were invariably in English, a problem with workplaces that have workers for whom English is not their primary language.

To deal with these and other shortcomings of MSDS, **a new system called SDS (Safety Data Sheets) was adopted by OSHA in 2012. The SDS system is part of the Global Harmonized System.**

Learn to read an SDS



WATCH
THE VIDEO

The narration of this video may seem sloooow to us New Jerseyans, but the information is important! Even if your job is in a workplace not usually associated with exposure to hazardous substances - for instance an office or classroom, there will be substances that require an SDS. Check out your workplace to see where the SDS are kept.

OSHA Training Services. (2012) Understanding GHS Safety Data Sheets (SDS's). (19:33)

Department of Transportation
(DOT)
Hazardous Materials Information
System



- US Department of Transportation

The symbols in the slide are part of the hazard communication system used by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). It is intended to provide uniform, quick information for first-responders and Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) teams in the event of incidents involving hazardous materials. You may have noticed these symbols on semi-tractor trailers transporting hazardous materials on New Jersey roadways.

Some problems with the DOT Hazardous Materials Information System:

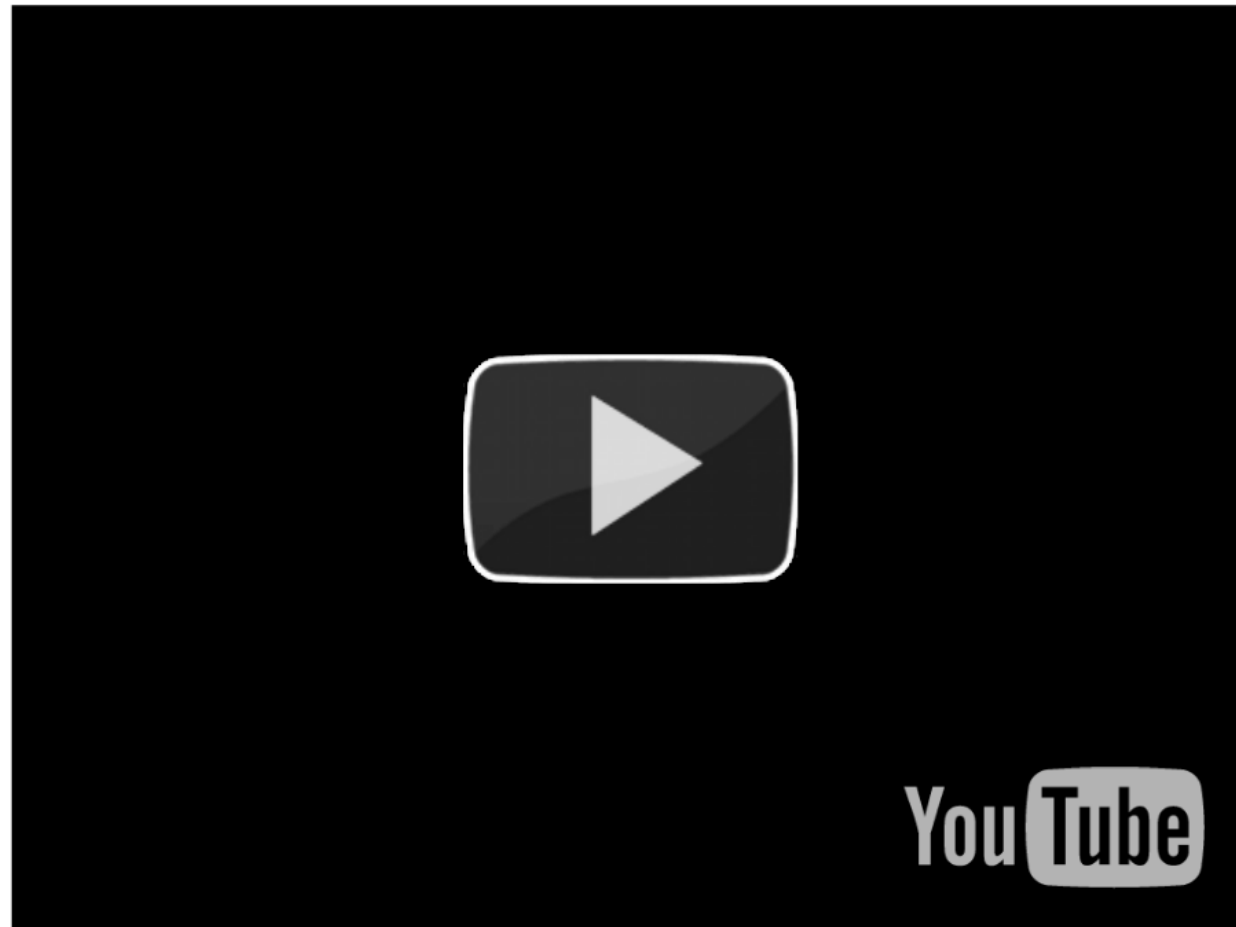
Placards only highlight one hazard and most chemicals have multiple hazards.

Incorrect placards, for instance, one study found over 25% of hazardous materials were mislabeled or missing

Despite the shortcomings of the system, imagine not knowing what is being carried in the tanker truck ahead of you in rush-hour traffic on I-95!

Transporting hazardous materials

WATCH
THE VIDEO



The Workplace Safety Store. (2012) DOT HAZMAT General Awareness Training. (2:13)

What information resources are in the workplace?



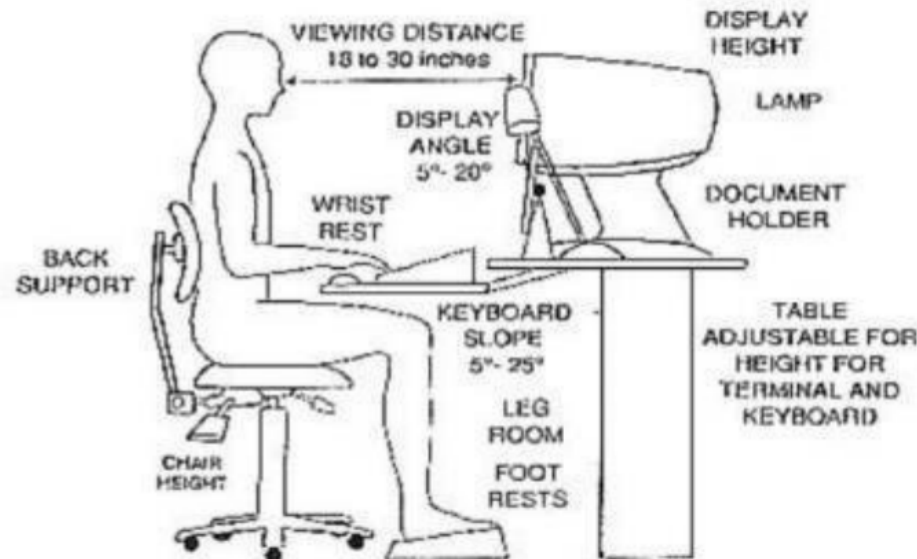
One workplace resource is the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards (available on the OSHA and NIOSHA websites).

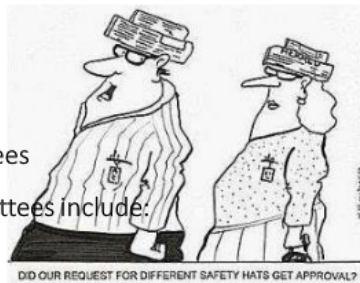
The Pocket Guide includes the following:

- Chemical names, synonyms, trade names, conversion factors, CAS, RTECS, and DOT numbers
- NIOSH Recommended Exposure Limits (NIOSH RELs)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs)
- NIOSH Immediate Dangerous to Life and Health values (NIOSH IDLHs)
- A physical description of the agent with chemical and physical properties
- Measurement methods
- Personal protection and sanitation recommendations
- Respirator recommendations
- Information on health hazards including route (or how the chemical enters the body – skin absorption, inhalation, ingestion) symptoms, first aid and target organ information.

Information is important in controlling other workplace hazards such as:

- Ergonomic hazards including improperly designed tools or work areas,
- improper lifting or reaching, poor visual conditions, or repeated motions
- Physical hazards including electromagnetic and ionizing radiation, noise, vibration, and extremes of temperature and pressure
- Biological hazards including insects, mold, fungi, and bacterial contamination including sanitation items (potable water, removal of waste and sewage , food handling)





Workplace Health and Safety Committees

Roles of union health and safety committees include:

- Respond to the concerns of workers,
- Initiate action on hazards it identifies,
- Conduct health and safety research to use in contract negotiations,
- Educate rank and file members to be able to identify health and safety hazards, to know the steps they should take to see that they're addressed,
- Work with shop stewards to represent workers with health and safety grievances.

- Morse, Mass COSH, ILO

Health and Safety Committees (HSCs) have been universally advocated for decades as a way of improving health and safety conditions on the job. They are mandated in some states and countries.

A National Safety Council survey found that HSCs were present in 75% of US work sites with 50 or more employees and 31% of smaller work sites. The committees are more common at unionized sites.

HSCs are a formal mechanism for increasing "worker participation,". Research shows that worker participation in health and safety issues is important for timely the resolution of occupational safety and health issues, reduced industrial disputes, policing of employer compliance with OSH statutes, and increased employee knowledge and awareness of occupational safety and health.

Source: Tim Morse, et al

HSCs can also be an effective vehicle for addressing poor work conditions. There are no universal rules for exactly how a health and safety committee should be established or how it should operate. The structures, powers, operating procedures, and even number of committees will vary from workplace to workplace. Differences will reflect many factors including: if workers are represented by a union or not, the variety and extent of the hazards, and management attitudes toward health and safety to name a few.

Through a union HSC, the union sets its own priorities and develops a strategy to implement if management does not respond to health or safety concerns within a reasonable timeframe (as the workers in the cartoon are experiencing).

Most Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA or union contract) address health and safety issues and conditions. The desire for a safe, healthy workplace is one of the main reasons workers choose to be unionized

For many unions, collective bargaining agreements establish joint union-management health and safety committees and more of these committees are being created all the time. A criticism of joint union/management committees is that they are used as a means for management to control health and safety issues rather than solve them. However, the joint union-management model has the potential to improve working conditions because it involves both management and workers in the process of identifying, eliminating, and controlling hazards.

Sources:

International Labor Organization, SAFEWORK. Using Health and Safety Committees at Work. Retrieved from: <http://actrav.ilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/com/comain.htm>



Despite the mechanisms in place to inform workers of hazards, no list or system can be complete as technologies change, new substances are used, or old substances are combined to create potentially new hazards. It is incumbent upon workers to be “intelligently aware” of their workplace environment. If the workplace is organized, union representatives can facilitate gathering and analyzing data. The resulting data can be used in contract negotiations and in health and safety committees.

Although there are companies committed to providing safe work environments and who are forthright in providing information to employees about hazards and their risks, the stakes are too high not to question the information that is provided to workers. Not all information is perfect – for instance, the combining of a new chemical with an old one could have an unintended consequence that the manufacturer was not aware of. Also, as you have learned, sometimes information is intentionally withheld or falsified – as at W.R. Grace.



from my perspective

I lived in Washington D.C. and the photo in this slide is a scene I am very familiar with. Railway cars of hazardous materials traverse Washington, DC daily. As you can see, the Capitol building is shockingly close to tanker cars filled with hazardous materials. In Albany, NY there are always miles of oil tank rail cars carrying Bakken crude oil along through the city of Albany and down the edge of the Hudson River to refineries in NJ. You will learn more about Bakken crude oil in the video in the next slide.

Since 9/11/2001 concerns about terrorism in the US has grown. As public awareness about the vulnerability of plants that manufacture and use hazardous chemicals and the transport of hazardous substances grow, questions are being raised about whether enough is being done to prevent deadly chemicals from being used as a terrorist weapon.

Workers who manufacture, handle and transport hazardous materials know first-hand about the risks that chemicals pose and the security vulnerabilities surrounding them. Unions are on the front lines of pressing for regulations to tighten security to prevent unintended and intentional chemical disasters.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Teamsters union have published researched reports, convened conferences, and taken other actions to alert state and federal governmental agencies about their concerns about rail and roadway security deficiencies. Some state firefighter associations have taken a position against the rail transport of the highly flammable crude Bakken oil crude. As you will learn from the video in the next slide, Bakken crude oil is so flammable that the trains transporting it are referred to as “bomb trains” by workers and concerned citizens. The transporting of Bakken crude oil is an example of how the health and safety concerns of workers are often also of concern to the communities that surround workplaces, whether the work is done in a factory or on US roadways and rail lines.

Optional viewing
WATCH
THE VIDEO
→



VICE News. (2014) *The Crude Gamble of Oil by Rail: Bomb Trains*. (23:29)

*Watching this video is optional.
If you have ever seen oil tanker railway cars rumbling
through your town, this video may interest you!*

Readings are posted on the Week 7 page.

Be sure to also view the workers' compensation presentation on the Week 7 page.

*That's it for this presentation -
hope you have a good week!*

Sources

Bingham, Eula. 1983. *Right to Know Movement*. American Journal of Public Health.

Clift, Steven. *E-Democracy*. Retrieved from: <http://www.publicus.net/present/public/>

Louisville Charter for Safer Chemicals. Retrieved from:
<http://www.louisvillecharter.org/home.shtml>

Mayo, Ed and Steinburg, Tom. *The Power of Information: An Independent Review*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/poi/power-of-information-review.pdf>

National Security Archive, George Washington University. *Freedom of Information at 40*. Retrieved from: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB194/index.htm>

Michaels D, Monforton C (2005). *Manufacturing Uncertainty: Contested Science and the Protection of the Public's Health and Environment*. American Journal of Public Health.

Morse, T. et al (2008). *Characteristics of Effective Job Health and Safety Committees*. New Solutions Journal.

New Jersey State AFL-CIO/Rutgers Occupational Safety and Health Education Program. *Health and Safety Workbook*.

Orum, Paul and Hemingway, Diane. 2007. *Give the Public and Workers the Full Right to Know and Participate*. New Solutions Journal. 2007.

U.S. Department of Labor. *Hazard Communication: Foundation of Workplace Chemical Safety Programs*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardcommunications/index.html>

Wikipedia. *Right to Know*. Retrieved from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_know