Toolbox Talk Training: Hazardous Substance Awareness

Use this overview to introduce four hazardous-substance discussions: arsenic, asbestos, benzene, and beryllium. It is an index and discussion aid, not a chemical-specific work procedure or proof that required training is complete. The employer must identify the chemicals and hazards in the actual work and select the applicable protections.

Hazardous Substance Awareness Topics:

- Hazardous Substance Awareness – Introduction

For construction work, 1926.59 applies the Hazard Communication requirements of 1910.1200. Under 1910.1200(h), employees must receive effective information and training at initial assignment and when a new chemical hazard they have not been trained about is introduced. Labels and Safety Data Sheets provide chemical-specific information. Training must address the employer's protective measures, including work practices, emergency procedures, and PPE.

- Hazardous Substance Awareness – Arsenic

Arsenic: Discuss health hazards, exposure assessment, and protective measures. The inorganic arsenic standard, 1910.1018, applies to construction through 1926.1118 but excludes pesticide application, wood-preservative treatment, and use of arsenically preserved wood. OSHA's May 3, 2023 interpretation explains that Hazard Communication protections still apply to workers exposed to arsenic-treated wood dust.

- Hazardous Substance Awareness – Asbestos

Asbestos: Discuss airborne-fiber hazards and the employer's duties before asbestos work. Construction standard 1926.1101 addresses identifying asbestos-containing and presumed asbestos-containing materials, exposure assessment, controls, and training. An awareness discussion does not qualify a worker to perform asbestos removal.

- Hazardous Substance Awareness – Benzene

Benzene: Discuss its presence in petroleum-derived products and fuels, its health and flammability hazards, and the employer's exposure assessment and controls. Construction section 1926.1128 applies 1910.1028, which has specific scope exclusions. The benzene standard does not cover every use of gasoline or every benzene-containing material.

- Hazardous Substance Awareness – Beryllium

Beryllium: Discuss sensitization and chronic beryllium disease, airborne exposure assessment, and controls. Construction standard 1926.1124 has scope exclusions and sets requirements for exposure control, respiratory protection, protective clothing, housekeeping, and training. The protections for the actual operation must be established by the employer.

Does anyone have questions about this topic? Thank you for your participation. Please remember to sign the sign-in form before leaving so your attendance at today’s session is recorded.

General safety information only. This material does not replace required training, a site-specific hazard assessment, or professional safety advice. Before using it, verify current requirements with OSHA (osha.gov) and your employer. Follow applicable regulations, equipment manufacturers’ instructions, and your employer’s safety procedures.

Sources: OSHA 1926.59; 1910.1200(h); 1926.1101; 1926.1118/1910.1018(a); 1926.1128/1910.1028(a); 1926.1124; OSHA arsenic interpretation, May 3, 2023.

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TOOLBOX TALK TRAINING SIGN-IN FORM

Topic discussed: Hazardous Substance Awareness

Company Name:_____ Date:_____

Discussion led by:_____

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Signatures record attendance only, not certification or completion of required training.

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