



# You Have Safety Questions? We Have Safety Answers!

## ««« By the STAO Safety Committee

The STAO Safety Committee welcomes enquiries, with respect to safety issues, from STAO members. Please send your questions to the Safety Committee Chair. Your questions and the STAO Safety Committee responses may be published in Crucible, particularly if the information is deemed of general interest to other STAO members. Anonymity, however, will be guaranteed.

**QUESTION# 34:** *The STAO Hazardous Chemicals CD contains chemical data sheets for over 260 chemicals or groups of chemicals. Are these data sheets legal MSDS's?*

**RESPONSE :** Yes and no! Legally, it is the supplier who is responsible for providing an unexpired MSDS for each controlled product (hazardous material) sold to an employer. [Section 37(1)(b) of the Act and section 17(1) of the regulation]

“Unexpired” means dated within the last 3 years. [Section 37(5) of the Act ]

As you are no doubt aware, there are specific requirements with respect to the format of the supplier MSDS. [Section 12 (1) and Schedule 1 of the regulation]

However, the employer is legally allowed to provide workers with an MSDS that has a different format than the supplier’s MSDS on two conditions:

1. the MSDS provided by the employer does not contain less hazard information than the supplier’s MSDS; and
2. the supplier’s MSDS is also available at the workplace. [Section 18(1) of the regulation]

In addition, the employer is permitted to make data sheets available to workers by means of a computer terminal, if the employer:

- a takes all reasonable steps to keep the terminal in working order;
- b provides a paper copy of the supplier MSDS if requested by an employee; and
- c provides training on how to access computer-stored data sheets. [Section 38 (5) of the Act]

It follows, therefore, that when District School Boards use our *Hazardous Chemicals CD* to make chemical data sheets available on a computer terminal, this must be in addition to having paper copies of each supplier MSDS somewhere on file in each workplace (i.e., school).

It is our understanding that Boards and/or individual teachers who decide to purchase the *STAO Hazardous Chemicals CD* recognize that the chemical data sheets accessed from the CD:

- i present the typical essential hazard information found in supplier MSDS in a much more user-friendly format; and
- ii can be more easily interpreted than supplier MSDS, by both teachers and students, since educational applications are emphasized.

