Purpose

The purpose of this standard is to establish recommended standards for posting hazardous material identification signs for rooms, businesses, buildings, facilities, and other interior or exterior locations where hazardous materials are stored, manufactured or used.

Fire incidents and other accidents involving hazardous materials require special consideration by emergency response personnel. In order to provide emergency response personnel with information about the nature of the materials that they may encounter within a business site, hazardous materials identification signs are required to be posted in accordance with these procedures.

Scope

This document was developed to provide details for posting of signs and or placards in accordance with 2015 Fire Code of New York State National Fire Protection Association - Chapter 704. This guideline specifies the design and placement of hazardous materials identification signs on property and within structures in which hazardous materials and hazardous wastes are stored, used, processed or handled.

Definitions

Hazardous Materials – Chemicals or substances that are physical or health hazards, whether the materials are in usable or waste condition.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) – A standardized written or printed document containing safety and health information about a hazardous material which is prepared in accordance with Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations contained in Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1910.1200.

NFPA 704 – National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Chapter 704, “Standard System for the Identification of the Hazardous Materials for Emergency Response.” A standardized, simple, readily recognized marking system that provides a general idea of the hazards, the severity of the hazards, or the hazardous material(s) stored inside a facility.

Applicability

Hazardous materials identification signs shall be required as specified in the Fire Code of New York State. In general, signs are required when the quantities of hazardous materials at a single site are sufficient to warrant the issuance of a fire code operational permit. Additionally, it is typical to placard with the numerals representing the highest hazard per classification, in the building or area, unless otherwise directed by the Fire Marshal.

a. This standard is applicable to industrial, commercial, and institutional facilities that manufacture, process, use or store hazardous materials.

b. This standard is not applicable to transportation or to use by the general public.

c. This standard is not applicable to chronic exposure or to non-emergency occupational exposure.
Placards

The NFPA 704 placarding system is intended to provide emergency response personnel with information about the relative hazards of hazardous materials within a facility, which allows emergency response personnel to formulate a more effective, timely response to an emergency incident at the facility.

1. At all main entrances to facilities and buildings that use, store or process hazardous materials or reporting quantities.
2. On entry gates or fences to facilities, buildings and exterior storage areas.
3. At the entrances to inside storage rooms or designated storage areas.
4. Entrances to cylinder (pressurized or cryogenic) storage areas.
5. On all parked trailers and/or cargo vehicles and shipping containers (see transport containers) which are used for temporary and/or permanent storage of hazardous materials

Labels

1. On all drums and/or tanks 30-gallon capacity or larger.
2. On all approved storage cabinets.
3. On all pressurized cylinders greater than 200 cu. Ft. capacity.
4. On all liquefied gases in excess of 150 gallon capacity.

Placard and Label Specifications

1. All labels and placards shall utilize the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) color coded hazard warning system.
2. An NFPA 704 placard is divided into four color-coded quadrants, each identifying a different hazard category:
   • Blue for health
   • Red for flammability
   • Yellow for reactivity (instability)
   • White for special hazard information, when necessary to indicate special information about the hazards
3. The placard system also uses a number rating system ranging from "0" to "4" to indicate the relative hazard within each hazard category.
   • "0" represents NO or very minimal hazard
   • "4" represents the HIGHEST degree of hazard

The hazard rating may be designated reviewing the Safety Data sheets or by contacting the Office of the Fire Marshal
4. Placards and labels shall be constructed of weather proof/resistant backings and materials.
5. Dimensions shall not be less than that specified in Figure 1.
6. The numerical hazard rating shall be black in color.
7. Diamond colors shall be blue, red, yellow and white representing Health, Fire, Reactivity and Other, respectively as indicated in Figure 1.