

DOS & DON'TS: [û] Follow Recommendations in MSDSs/SDSs



There are many sources of information on how to protect workers from workplace safety hazards. Obviously, you must comply with the requirements spelled out in the OHS laws. But you should also consider the requirements and recommendations in other sources, such as the MSDSs'soon to be replaced by SDSs under [WHMIS 2015](#) that accompany controlled or hazardous products. After all, suppliers provide the information on MSDSs/SDSs to help employers ensure that the corresponding products are used safely. That's why MSDSs contain information on how to safely handle and store the product and the PPE workers should use when working with it. Ignoring the recommendations in a hazardous product's MSDS may endanger workers and result in an OHS violation.

That's the mistake a manufacturer in Ontario made. A worker was in the process of purging an injection molding machine of one type of plastic for another plastic that required a higher temperature to melt. The MSDS for the first plastic noted that if it's over-heated, it'll release formaldehyde gas. So the MSDS recommended that workers involved in processing the plastic use PPE and that ventilation be provided to control worker exposure to dust or process vapors. But the employer didn't provide ventilation or PPE for workers working with this plastic.

After the worker was done with the purging procedure, the machine was set to process the second plastic and the

temperature was raised. But the purging hadn't fully gotten rid of all of the first plastic, which began to degrade and off-gas formaldehyde. As a result, six workers suffered adverse health effects from exposure to the gas, including itchy and watery eyes, and sore throats. The area was evacuated and large bay doors opened to ventilate it. The manufacturer pleaded guilty to failing to provide local [ventilation](#) in the area where the plastic was being processed. The court fined it \$50,000 [*Ultra Manufacturing Ltd.*, [Govt. News Release](#), June 25, 2015].