

As part of your organization's Hazard Communication Program, you should identify the hazard levels of the chemicals stored at your facility. Signs indicating hazard levels can assist emergency response personnel in determining the appropriate actions to take in the event of an emergency. This identification will also help communicate chemical hazards to employees and visitors. The hazardous material placard described below is the primary identification style for fire departments and other emergency response entities, however other styles of signage such as Hazardous Material Identification Guide (HMIG) or Hazardous Material Identification System (HMIS) can also be used internally.

Identifying Hazardous Materials

Materials are evaluated based on three primary categories:

- Health
- Flammability
- Reactivity

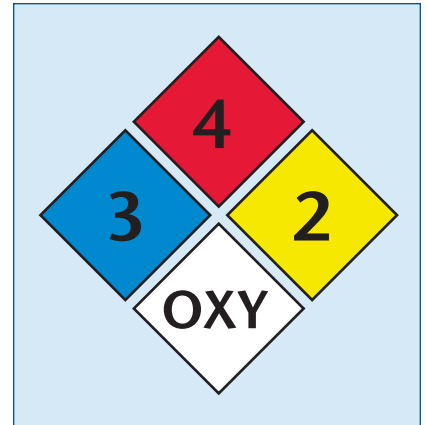
Each chemical is given a numerical hazard level for each category, from the highest hazard level of four to the lowest level of zero. Hazard levels can be determined with the use of NFPA 704®, the chemical's material safety data sheet, or by the chemical manufacturer. This information can be communicated using a hazard sign as shown below.

Fire Hazard (Flash Points)

- 4 – Below 73°F
- 3 – Below 100°F
- 2 – Below 200°F
- 1 – Above 200°F
- 0 – Will not burn

Health Hazard

- 4 – Deadly
- 3 – Extremely hazardous
- 2 – Hazardous
- 1 – Slightly hazardous
- 0 – Normal material



Reactivity Hazard

- 4 – May detonate
- 3 – May detonate with heat or shock
- 2 – Violent chemical change
- 1 – Not stable if heated
- 0 – Stable

Specific Hazard

- OXY – Oxidizer
- W – Use no water

Continued

Hazard Sign Placement

If your building is over 5,000 square feet, post the hazard sign(s) at the room(s) or area(s) where the chemicals are stored and used. The signs should indicate the most severe degree of hazard, of all the chemicals, in each category. If chemicals are moved within the building, either move the sign or post an additional sign at the area where the chemicals are relocated. Remove all signs where chemicals are no longer located. Near an outside entrance, post a hazard sign indicating the highest hazards for all inside signs.

If your building is less than 5,000 square feet, post the hazard sign(s) near an outside entrance indicating the most severe degree of hazard in each category. Final approval for placement and size of signs for all locations will be determined by your local authority having jurisdiction (fire marshal, fire chief, etc.).

For Additional Information

University of Oregon: www.uoregon.edu

- Hazardous Material Identification Guide

National Fire Protection Association:

www.nfpa.org

- NFPA 704®: Standard System for the Identification of the Hazards of Materials for Emergency Response