



Records Retention Guide

Safety Data Sheets and Chemical Records

Why this matters

Hazard Communication is mostly an active-program rule. You keep the current written program, the current chemical list, current labels, current SDS access, and current training. But there is one place where the past matters: old chemical records.

Under OSHA's access to records rule, a Safety Data Sheet is treated as an employee exposure record. That changes how long you keep it.

The core rule

When you stop using a chemical, you do not have to keep its SDS forever. But you must keep one of the following for at least 30 years:

1. The Safety Data Sheet for that chemical, or
2. Some other record of the chemical's identity, where it was used, and when it was used.

Keeping the superseded SDS is usually the simplest way to satisfy this. If you would rather not store every old SDS, keep a short record instead: the product name, where it was used, and the dates it was in use. Use the SDS Archive Log for this.

What to keep, and for how long

Record	Keep while in use	Keep after a chemical is gone
Current SDS for a chemical in use	Yes, readily accessible each work shift	Not required once the chemical is gone, if you keep an identity-and-use record instead
Superseded SDS or identity-and-use record	n/a	At least 30 years
Chemical inventory / list	Yes, current	Archiving old versions is recommended, since it doubles as your identity-and-use record
HazCom training records	Recommended to keep	Recommended. Not federally required, but useful to prove training happened. Keep per your own policy, and check your state

Practical recommendation

The lowest-friction approach for most workplaces is to archive superseded SDSs and old inventory lists rather than discard them. That satisfies the 30-year logic without a separate tracking effort. Use the SDS Archive Log if you prefer to keep a compact record instead of every old sheet.

State note

Some states add their own retention or right-to-know expectations. New Jersey, Minnesota, and California are the ones to check first. See the state sections of the resource center.

This is a template to help you organize your recordkeeping. It is not legal advice and does not guarantee compliance. You are responsible for applying it to your workplace. Based on 29 CFR 1910.1200 and 29 CFR 1910.1020.