

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: OSHA's Revised Haz-Com Standard - "Skull & Crossbones" Pictogram

[Reference 1910.1200(f) / 1926.59(f)]

OSHA recently revised their Hazard Communication Standard to require manufacturers and distributors of hazardous chemicals and products to begin standardizing their container labels to display new features called "Pictograms". These are eight different icons used to depict distinct hazards associated with their products. Some products may have only one or two of the eight pictograms displayed on their labels, whereas more complex products may have multiple pictograms appearing on their label when the product presents multiple safety or health hazards.

Today we will discuss the "**Skull and Crossbones**" pictogram that identifies **acute and potentially fatal toxicity hazards** (*see this pictogram provided on the handout provided with this toolbox talk, we recommend making copies for each trainee*). This Pictogram is specific to certain chemicals that, depending on the toxicity of the chemical, indicate that the chemical may be highly toxic (poisonous) or fatal if swallowed, if contact is made with skin, and/or if it is inhaled.

So, when you see a Pictogram depicting a "**Skull and Crossbones**" on a product label, refer to the hazard statement(s) that appear on that label too. The toxic effects of the material you are working with may vary, from acutely toxic to potentially fatal. The hazard statements can provide more information about the level of hazard you are dealing with, as well as the chemical's route(s) of entry into your body and the particular organ(s) targeted by the chemical.

And pay particular attention to the Precautionary Statements appearing on the label too, as they list recommended measures that should be taken to minimize the potential for developing an acute (relatively quick) reaction resulting from use or handling of the toxic product. Examples of precautionary statements that may accompany products bearing the "**Skull and Crossbones**" Pictogram on the label are "Do not eat, drink or smoke when using this product", "Do not get in eyes, on skin, or on clothing", "Do not breathe dust/fume/gas/mist/vapors/spray", and/or "Wear protective gloves/protective clothing". Additional information about precautions to follow and safe use of these products is also available on their Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

This particular pictogram should help you quickly recognize potentially hazardous associated with products that are highly toxic (*if possible, give specific examples of such products present at your job site*). OSHA has given manufacturers and importers of hazardous products until June 1, 2015 to make the full transition to the new labeling requirements. So in the meantime, start to watch for the "**Skull and Crossbones**" Pictogram to appear on some of the container labels here at work, and heed the warnings and specific precautions provided for use of that product.

Does anyone have a question or comment about the "**Skull and Crossbones**" Pictogram that you will soon start to see on some labels? Please be sure to sign-in on the training certification form.



ACUTE TOXICITY

- **Fatal or toxic**

