Hazardous Materials on the Job

article and photos supplied by: Scott Kretschmer

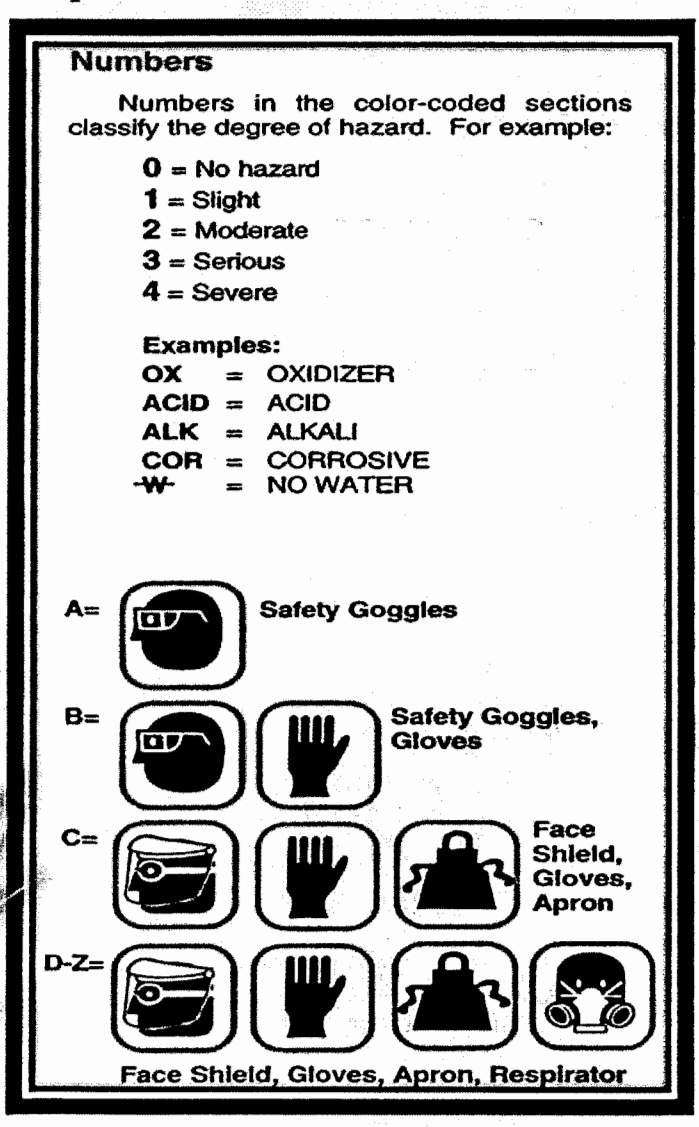
Last year during the R.M.S. conference one of the cooks announced that a friend had ingested some patina solution, and was in the hospital. He later died from organ failure because of the selenous acid in the patina solution. Here is an article from - Chad Abraham/Pitkin County correspondent August 19, 2006

Rifle man dies after accidental worksite poisoning

OSHA's Hazard Communication (Right To Know) Standard requires all chemicals used in the workplace to be clearly labeled. This is one reason: A metalworker died Aug. 6, two days after accidentally ingesting a highly toxic liquid he thought was an energy drink at an Old Snowmass work site.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration are investigating the job-site safety practices of Pitkin Iron, the Glenwood Springs company where Frank Gabossi III worked. Gabossi, a longtime resident of Rifle, was 53. On Friday, Aug. 4, he and a colleague went to a home on Snowmass Creek Road to work on a metal staircase, said Ron Ryan, investigator at the Pitkin County Sheriff's Office.

Around noon, Gabossi walked back to their truck and picked up a Gatorade bottle containing Antique Black. The bottle still had the drink label on it, and it was not marked as containing the agent, used to age metal. The substance, which is bright blue, contains selenous acid, which is highly corrosive and for which there is no antidote, Ryan said. Gabossi apparently swallowed half a mouthful before spitting out the other half. He immediately knew what had happened and told his co-worker, who drove him to Valley View Hospital. He was airlifted to St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, where he died. The men put the liquid into the smaller bottle for convenience; it is usually stored in five-gallon drums on the grounds of the Glenwood company. Selenous acid, which Ryan said is also common in "gun bluing" agents, devastates the human body at the cellular level. Cells can't perform normal functions related to energy production and expelling waste, leading to organ failure. Gabossi's death is considered an accident, and no criminal charges are planned, Ryan said.



This was a violation; of basic Haz.com, safety training & labeling of hazardous materials. This death would have been easily avoidable if employee training and practice was to use a clearly marked bottle to store the patina solution in small quantities for use on job sites The next pages discuses labeling and some Haz.com. More MSDS information to come in the future issues.

Any questions call me @ 970 567-2609

Chemical Labels and the MSDS: Know What You're Dealing with

Labels and MSDSs provide important safety information. Protect yourself by taking time to carefully read chemical labels and MSDSs before you move, handle, or open a chemical container.

Reading container labels

Labels and MSDSs should always tell you:

- **The common and/or chemical name,** including any chemical ingredients
- **The name and address** of its manufacturer or importer
- Its potential **health and physical hazards** (for example, some chemicals can damage the eyes or skin, causing burns, rashes, vision problems, etc.)

All MSDSs and some labels also provide information regarding:

- **Protective clothing, equipment, and procedures** needed to safely use the chemical
- **Proper storage and handling** such as "keep away from open flames"

Colors, bars, and diamonds

Information on labels can be shown using words, colors, numbers, pictures, symbols, or any combination of these.

The most common labeling systems use color-coded bars or diamonds to indicate the type of hazard. Colored areas on bars and diamonds indicate the kind of hazard. For example:

- Red = fire hazard
- Yellow = reactivity hazard
- Blue = health hazard

The white area of the labels contain information regarding the specific chemical. For example, the health hazard the chemical may cause, what part of the body may be affected by that chemical, or what protective equipment should be worn when handling the chemical.