


What can you learn from a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)?

You will need to examine MSDS to carry out a suitable COSHH Assessment for your salon. They are prepared by chemical suppliers; by UK law they must be sent if you buy a chemical, but may be requested at any time. The information will help you handle and use a product safely.

WHAT MUST THEY CONTAIN?

A list of 16 headings must appear on a UK safety data sheet. The information included under these headings will help make sure that you fully understand the risks (some US MSDSs may contain information in a different order).

HEADING	PLAIN ENGLISH EXPLANATION
Chemical Product and Company Identification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common and chemical name of product. • The name, address and emergency telephone number of the manufacturer or supplier.
Composition, Information on ingredients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component hazard symbols and safety phrases (see later). • What is the product made of? • Look out for Daimine (PPD) (found in hair colourants), CMTG (glyceryl monothioglycolate (found in some perms), thioglycolic acid (found in strengtheners), Diazonium (in dyes), Henna (colourant), Latex (gloves), Persulphates (in bleach).
Health Hazard Information. Acute: Chronic: Swallowed: Eyes: Skin: Inhaled:	What might happen if too much of the product is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathed in? • Gets into eyes? • Gets onto skin? • Swallowed? What can I expect if someone is over exposed?
First Aid Information.	What to do if too much of the product is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathed in? • Gets into eyes? • Gets onto skin?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swallowed? <p>What should I do if someone is over exposed?</p>
Fire Fighting Measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to tackle a fire involving this product and any dangerous decomposition products when it burns. Will it burn or explode?
Accidental Release Measures.	How to deal with spills safely.
Handling & Storage Information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there special handling precautions I should follow? Use in well ventilated areas. What protective clothing or equipment do I need? Gloves, apron, mask? What ventilation is required? How should the material be stored? Are there materials this product should not come in contact with?
Exposure Controls, Personal Protection.	Any exposure limits placed on this product and the type of personal protective equipment needed to use it safely.
Physical and chemical properties.	Physical description: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it look like? Does it smell? What does it contain?
Stability and Reactivity.	Is it safe to store alongside other chemicals? Is it dangerous in a fire?
Toxicological Information.	How much of it is known to cause ill health?
Ecological Information.	Will a spillage threaten wildlife?
Disposal Considerations.	How do I dispose of it properly?
Transport Information.	Is it dangerous if carried on a vehicle?
Regulatory Information.	What labels must be placed on it by law. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Phrases: this will describe the exact nature of the risk to humans; Look out for R21, R38, R42, R43, R66. * Safety Phrases: any that apply must be followed.
Other Information.	e.g. date of MSDS creation, date of next expected review.

The MSDS is crucial – it will tell you the kind of precautions you must take.

For example:-

- Train staff about the risks – dermatitis and asthma allergy risk.
- How it should be used – diluted, mixed with, kept away from, etc.
- The need for latex-free and powder free gloves;
- Health surveillance – Monthly recorded skin and asthma allergy check.
- Extra ventilation needed.