

Labels Tell Lots

A Label Tells You . . .

The identity of the chemical—the common name, chemical name, or product name.

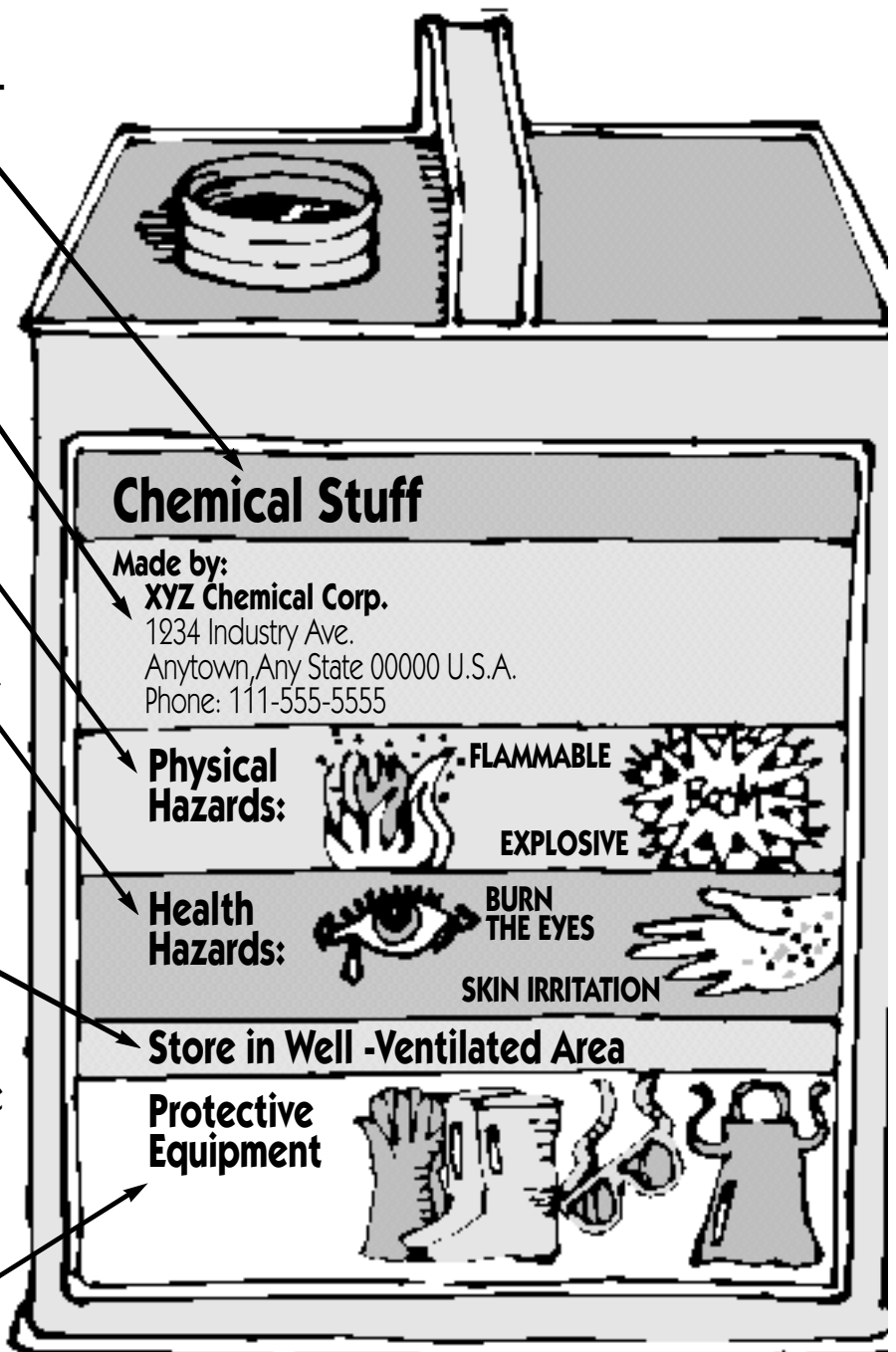
The name and address of the company that manufactured or imported the chemical.

The chemical's physical hazards. That's what could happen if you don't handle it properly. Is it flammable or combustible? explosive? Is it reactive?

The chemical's health hazards. These are the possible health problems that could result from overexposure. Is it toxic? an irritant? Could it cause cancer?

Although not required by OSHA, some labels also include important information such as storage and handling instructions. This could include information like "Use only in well-ventilated areas," or "Store in tightly closed containers."

Although OSHA doesn't require it, some labels list basic protective clothing, equipment, and procedures that should be used to work safely with the chemical. Here, you might be told, "Avoid contact with skin," or "Use eye protection," etc.



Color/Number Labels

Two commonly used systems with numbers and colors on labels are the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) system and the color-bar system.

Colors Show Type of Hazard

In both systems, each color on the label stands for a different type of hazard:



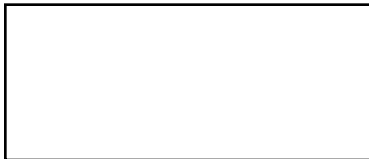
● **Blue** = health hazard



● **Red** = fire hazard



● **Yellow** = reactive hazard



● **White** = special hazard (NFPA) or protective equipment required (color bar)

Numbers Show Degree of Hazard

Both the NFPA and the color-bar systems also use numbers from 0 to 4 to show the degree of hazard in an uncontrolled situation.

0=Minimum hazard

3=Serious hazard

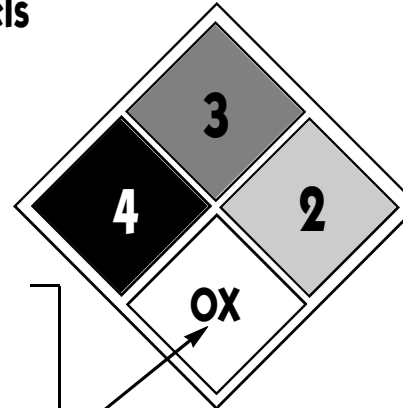
1=Slight hazard

4=Severe hazard

2=Moderate hazard

Example: A label with a 4 in its red section means a high degree of fire risk, if you don't handle the chemical correctly.

NFPA-type Labels



White=Specific Hazard

OX = Oxidizer

ACID = Acid

ALK = Alkali

COR = Corrosive

= Use no water

= Radioactive

Label Colors

Blue

Red

Yellow

White

Color Bar-Type Labels

White= Personal Protection

② **HEALTH**

③ **FLAMMABILITY**

① **REACTIVITY**

Ⓐ **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

The letter that appears in the white bar is keyed to specific personal protective gear.

For example:

A =

B =

C =

D-Z = etc.

Note: Reactivity numbers refer to the measure of stability and the danger of reactivity with air or water.