

### Student Handout

#### WHMIS

Many chemicals used in plumbing can cause conditions ranging from minor skin irritation to serious injury and disease.

If workers are expected to work with hazardous materials, their employer is required to inform them that the materials are hazardous and train the workers in their safe use.

All B.C. workplaces that use materials identified as hazardous ("controlled products") by the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) are required to follow the WHMIS system. The system uses consistent labeling to help workers recognize hazardous materials. The system and labels provide specific information on handling, storing and disposing of such materials.

#### Examples of hazards

- Adhesives, such as PVC pipe glue
- solvents
- solder
- sulphur dioxide

#### Safety tips

If you have been successfully trained in how to handle hazardous materials, you should be able to answer these 4 questions:

1. What are the hazards of the product you are using?
2. How do you protect yourself?
3. What should you do in case of an emergency or spill?
4. Where can you get more information on the product?



### WHMIS - page 2

#### Safety tips (continued)

- Read the labels and the MSDSs that accompany chemicals.
- Use non-toxic non-flammable products when possible, and ask your employer to consider replacing toxic and flammable products with safer substitutes.
- When handling hazardous materials:
  - Use the chemical only as directed.
  - Follow safe work procedures.
  - Use personal protective equipment (e.g., clothing, rubber gloves, goggles and/or face shields) as recommended by the manufacturers and required by your employer.
  - Be sure you are working in an adequately ventilated area with approved fire protection.
  - Do not do "hot work" where flammable chemicals are in use or stored.
  - Check that first aid is available.
- Store chemicals in a properly ventilated, locked area and post warning signs.
- If you do not understand WHMIS labeling and markings, ask your supervisor.

