



Turning HazMat Headaches into Retail Relief!

The Business Case for Retailers to Outsource EH&S Services

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The Hazardous Material Situation

Think about a grocery store that stocks its shelves with an abundance of products. What does the store do when a bottle of Clorox Bleach spills on an employee and all over the aisle? How does the store retrieve information on the chemical to properly treat the employee's exposure? What documents does the employee access to expedite the cleanup of the hazmat spill? Are the store's employees trained in the management of hazmat spills and exposures?

Consider a home improvement retail business opening an additional location in a neighboring state. What are the local regulations regarding hazardous waste disposal and reporting? Can existing plans, permits and processes be used? Will new ones need to be developed? How will employees be trained? What will they be trained in - Waste, Transportation, Cleanup, or Bloodborne?

Imagine a drug store expanding its business to sell hair care products quickly and cost effectively over the Internet. What must it consider before shipping them by air? Are there requirements for packaging hazardous and non-hazardous materials together? What markings, labels and documents need to accompany the shipment? What paperwork is required with the shipments? Who do you call if there's a problem in transport?

These situations are common challenges for today's retailers. Because of national incidents involving hazardous materials and security, including the recent airline incidents and creation of homeland security, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have made it a priority to regulate the packaging, shipping and handling of hazardous materials.

Additionally, there is increased pressure to notify employees and consumers of possible hazards, along with a stronger push nationwide to protect the environment and natural resources. Federal, state and local regulatory agencies require businesses to report onsite hazardous materials and storage information in case a disaster occurs, emergency responders can respond accordingly.

This can be an overwhelming task.

Challenging on their own, these problems and questions become even larger issues for every new store a retailer opens. "Each municipality has its own set of rules and regulations. For example, there are 56 counties in California alone," said Christopher Kraus. "As retailers increase the number of facilities, the work multiplies and it becomes more difficult to remain in compliance."

Christopher Kraus is a California State Licensed Environmental Contractor professionally certified in Hazardous Materials Management and Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response. He is certified by the Institute of Hazardous Materials Management and is a California OES Incident Commander and BEAC Certified Professional Environmental Auditor.

For most retailers, 10 percent of their merchandise falls into the category of hazardous materials. "If you have 100, 500 or 1500 locations, maintaining and updating MSDSs for up to 5000 different products per location is an arduous task," said Kraus.

Besides the fear of hefty fines and possible court action for non-compliance, companies rightfully worry about their public image and the sweeping impact of a mishandled hazardous material event.

"All you need is one incident that receives media attention and it becomes a PR nightmare," said Kraus. "Retailers are particularly vulnerable to the problems associated with hazardous materials," he added.

The Solution To Hazardous Material Compliance

Today's retailers strive to concentrate on their core business – not researching the details of the hazardous materials they're working with daily. "Retailers do not need to be recyclers, poison control specialists or hazardous material experts," said Kraus. Instead of delving into the intricacies of hazardous material compliance, retailers are turning to outsourcing experts.

EH&S outsourcers help customers effectively comply with hazardous material laws to keep employees and the environment safe. Environmental specialists are well educated in these various requirements. Working with retailers, they develop streamlined systems for hazardous material shipments, disposal and reporting.

Missing product labels? Outsourcing companies are available to answer questions about what to do with damaged product. In addition, they can manage vendor selection and management of such materials cost-effectively.

Need to alert local authorities of hazardous materials on the premises? Outsourcers, who are familiar with federal, state and local regulations, use sophisticated tools to track reporting requirements for customers, thereby insuring compliance. No more worrying about what's due, when it's due, where it's due and paying fees. Retailers can rest easy knowing their compliance requirements are met.

Transporting potentially hazardous product? Outsourcing companies can assist retailers in making sure air and ground shipments are secured, labeled and documented to meet all DOT and FAA requirements. It is a valuable service given the numerous and detailed requirements for transporting hazardous materials, from specific labeling methods, international identification codes and intricate paperwork.

Significant Cost Savings

Companies like 3E have developed services to effectively manage the burdens of hazardous material requirements. Providing consolidated compliance services enables retailers to keep costs at a minimum, which is good news to management and consumers alike.

Although retailers may have a few associates trained in some aspects of hazardous materials, they most likely have limited knowledge about clean up and disposal. It would take years of time and thousands of dollars to train associates to know as much about hazmat management as today's more stringent standards require. Need hard numbers? Retailers working with 3E save \$2,000 - \$10,000 per location annually by outsourcing these functions.

With more than 15 years experience, 3E has a proven track record of understanding and solving retailers' business challenges. 3E works with dozens of large home improvement businesses, national department stores, large co-ops, auto dealerships, drug store chains and grocery stores serving 25,000 retail locations across the country.

Doing business as a retailer comes with its own set of stressors. Dealing with hazardous material management doesn't have to be one of them. Instead, turn to the leading EH&S outsourcing experts, 3E, an organization that helps retailers effectively comply with hazardous material laws to assure the safety of consumers, employees and the environment.

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