



Varied inventory makes MSDS management an onerous task

A burden lifted

COMPLIANCE All industries face regulatory demands on their operations in terms of health, safety and environmental protection. In the dangerous goods sphere, these obligations are even greater and 3E Company has developed new systems to help operators ensure compliance

If one lists out all the provisions and regulations to do with health and safety in the workplace, the protection of the environment and public safety, one might be surprised that companies, whether they be manufacturers or carriers, can get any work done at all. This burden of compliance is at its greatest in the hazardous materials arena, where very strict requirements are placed on operators, not only in terms of the safe containment and carriage of goods, but also in respect of emergency response requirements and the need to maintain and make available extensive documentation. This is an onerous task for any company, big or small, but is complicated further for large concerns with multiple locations and long lists of products being handled.

In order to help companies achieve compliance with all the necessary regulations and requirements, 3E Company is now offering a comprehensive information and compliance service, comprising online information, on-call assistance and scheduled reporting. Most recently the company announced the 3E Transportation Classification solution, designed to support companies who need to comply with regulations enforced by the US Department of

Transportation (DOT) that require transporters to appropriately classify, package, mark, label, placard and ship hazardous materials. The company, based in Carlsbad, California, developed these services for the hazardous materials industry on the back of existing health, safety and environmental assistance it was providing in other industrial sectors when it saw the very real need for a comprehensive information resource in the hazmat industry.

Three in one

3E's package of services for the hazardous materials industry comprises a cross-platform suite of systems tailored to the compliance needs of the various sectors. 3E Online provides access to material safety data sheets (MSDSs) through a searchable database covering some 10,000 commonly used substances. This part of the 3E service also contains the 3Etrainer online learning management system that offers easily accessible training via the internet.

The 3E OnCall platform provides 24/7 access to trained professionals at 3E's HazMat Mission Control Center. Users can access a wide range of information, including the

MSDS database, as well as site-specific inventory details managed by 3E by request. The OnCall platform also provides emergency response assistance and expert medical advice in the event of a toxic spill. This part of 3E's hazmat service also provides guidance on transport issues, support for those involved in waste management and transport, and response to detailed queries on training issues. 3E can also prepare and provide shipping papers and documentation for specific shipments.

The final part of the suite of systems is 3E OnTime, which draws on the company's expertise to help companies meet their compliance requirements in terms of regulatory disclosures. 3E can also help customers drawn up site-specific inventories and cross-reference this list against its MSDS database for use in its OnCall service. In addition, the inventory can be pre-classified to determine packaging and shipping requirements. Consultancy services and bespoke training are also provided.

Different needs, different services

These three platforms are used to provide a range of off-the-shelf services to the various sectors of the industry, which can be enhanced with add-on services as required. For transport professionals, for instance, the basic service provides customers with access to assistance on packaging and classification queries, covering domestic US and international modal regulations. This service can be enhanced with a 24/7 hotline for specific queries, assistance in the preparation of shipping papers and documentation, and an emergency response service under which 3E arranges for response personnel to attend an incident and provides MSDS or other information. 3E can manage and track a response situation to help parties involved with their reporting obligations.

The requirements of chemical shippers are different to those of carriers and the range of services provided under 3E's basic service is therefore tailored to their needs. It offers online, automated MSDS document creation and distribution via a dedicated and secure website. MSDSs can also be distributed to those who need access via the manufacturer's own website through a link to the 3E website. Again, the company can help manage the reporting and disclosure process, making sure that companies avoid potentially heavy fines for non-compliance.

3E says that these services alleviate the burden of regulatory compliance, allowing compliance personnel to concentrate on their strategic responsibilities associated with maintaining a safe working environment. It now has more than 175 employees and provides services a comprehensive outsourced solution to more than 75,000 customer locations around the world. From its California base it is already helping clients throughout North America and is expanding into new markets in Europe and Latin America.

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