



Safety Data Sheets

# Module 4

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Health & Safety  
**Essentials**

Registered charity number 207890

# Other Data Sheets

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## Safety Data Sheets from other Nations

Safety data sheets are received from suppliers all over the world – there are currently different systems in different countries.

The USA refers to SDSs as Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) and whilst the principle is the same, the contents can be quite different. Similarly, the Canadian system called “Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)” provides yet another variation.

For the purposes of doing a COSHH assessment, there is usually enough relevant data to fulfil this need but the assessor must be careful when ‘converting’ Personal Protective Equipment or Respiratory Protective Equipment standards from one country to another or following recommendations on labelling, waste disposal and many other issues.

In all cases you should try to secure a relevant current safety data sheet for the country that you are in.

## Product and Technical data sheets

Many suppliers publish a range of ‘other’ data sheets or make them available for download from the Internet but these cannot be used as a substitute for the official SDS. Whilst they can be a useful source of additional information, you should be clear on the purpose and function of the publication before using the information.

In the case of *product* data sheets, the objective is to extol the virtues of their product often comparing it with their competitors’ and quoting *only* the technical data that is relevant to their claims.

Some companies also publish *technical* data sheets and these too contain useful information. However, its purpose is usually to provide the buying organisation with data that will allow them to assess ‘fitness for purpose’.

