

1 **State of Arkansas**  
2 **78th General Assembly**  
3 **Regular Session, 1991**

**A Bill ACT 1172 OF 1991**  
**SENATE BILL 476**

4 **By: Senators Pagan and Moore**

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**For An Act To Be Entitled**

8 "AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE \_PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' CHEMICAL  
9 RIGHT TO KNOW ACT\_; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

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11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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13 SECTION 1. TITLE. The provisions of this act shall be known and may be  
14 cited as the Public Employees' Chemical Right to Know Act.

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16 SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE. (a) The General Assembly  
17 finds that the proliferation and variety of hazardous chemicals present in  
18 government employment may affect the health, safety and welfare of public  
19 employees of the State of Arkansas.

20 (b) The General Assembly also finds that most private employers, in  
21 compliance with U. S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)  
22 regulations, provide their employees with training, information, and other  
23 protections concerning chemical hazards; but that public employees of the  
24 State of Arkansas and its political subdivisions are not subject to OSHA  
25 regulations and do not receive the benefits of these protections.

26 (c) It is the purpose of this act to provide public employees access to  
27 training and information concerning hazardous chemicals to enable them to  
28 minimize their exposure to such chemicals and protect their health, safety and  
29 welfare.

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31 SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

32 (1) "Chemical manufacturer" means an employer with a workplace where  
33 chemical(s) are produced for use or distribution.

34 (2) "Director" means the Director of the Department of Labor or his  
35 designee.

36 (3) "Distributor" means a business, other than a chemical manufacturer

1 or importer, which supplies hazardous chemicals to other distributors or to  
2 employers.

3 (4) "Exposure" or "exposed" means that an employee is subjected to a  
4 hazardous chemical in the course of employment through any route of entry  
5 (inhalation, ingestion, skin contact or absorption, etc.), and includes  
6 potential (e.g. accidental or possible) exposure.

7 (5) "Hazard Communication Standard" means the Hazard Communication  
8 Standard adopted by the U. S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
9 and codified in the Code of Federal Regulations at 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1200, as  
10 of the date of enactment of this act.

11 (6) "Hazardous chemical" means any element, chemical compound or  
12 mixture of elements or compounds which is a physical hazard or a health hazard  
13 as defined by the Hazard Communication Standard.

14 (7) "Label" or "labeling" means any written, printed, or graphic  
15 material, displayed on or affixed to containers of hazardous chemicals.

16 (8) "Material safety data sheet" or "MSDS" means written or printed  
17 material concerning a hazardous chemical which is prepared in accordance with  
18 the Hazard Communication Standard.

19 (9) "Public Employee" means any employee of a public employer, who may  
20 be exposed to hazardous chemicals in the workplace under normal operating  
21 conditions or foreseeable emergencies. Office workers and nonresident  
22 management are not generally included unless their job performance routinely  
23 involves potential exposure to hazardous chemicals.

24 (10) "Public employer" means the State of Arkansas and each political  
25 subdivision thereof, as defined in Arkansas Code §21-5-603(b).

26 (11) "Trade secret" is defined in accordance with Arkansas Code §4-75-  
27 601(4).

28 (12) "Work area" means a room or defined space in a workplace where  
29 hazardous chemicals are produced or used, and where employees are present.

30 (13) "Workplace" means an establishment, job site, or project, at one  
31 geographical location containing one or more work areas under a public  
32 employer's control or direction.

33 (14) "Workplace chemical list" means a list of hazardous chemicals in a  
34 workplace developed pursuant to Section 7 of this act.

35 (15) All other definitions of the Hazard Communication Standard as they

1 exist on the date of enactment of this act are hereby adopted and incorporated  
2 by reference.

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4 SECTION 4. DUTIES OF PUBLIC EMPLOYERS. RS. Each public employer shall  
5 do the following: (a) post adequate notice, as provided by the Director, at  
6 locations where notices are normally posted, informing employees about their  
7 rights under this act;

8 (b) ensure proper chemical labeling in accordance with Section 5;

9 (c) maintain and make available material safety data sheets in  
10 accordance with Section 6;

11 (d) compile and maintain a workplace chemical list in accordance with  
12 Section 7;

13 (e) provide employee information and training in accordance with Section  
14 8; and

15 (f) handle trade secrets in accordance with Section 12.

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17 SECTION 5. LABELING. (a) Existing labels on containers of hazardous  
18 chemicals shall not be removed or defaced.

19 (b) If a public employer transfers a hazardous chemical from the  
20 original container to another container, the employer shall reproduce or  
21 otherwise place on the container to which the hazardous chemical was  
22 transferred the identity of the hazardous chemical and appropriate hazard  
23 warnings. However, if such hazardous chemical is regulated under the Federal  
24 Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, 7 United States Code §§ 136 et  
25 seq., or the Arkansas Pesticide Control Act, Arkansas Code §§ 2-16-401 et  
26 seq., then such employer shall reproduce on the container to which such  
27 hazardous chemical was transferred the chemical name or common name on the  
28 original container.

29 (c) A public employer is not required to label portable containers into  
30 which hazardous chemicals are transferred from labeled containers, and which  
31 are intended only for the immediate use of the employee who performs the  
32 transfer. Public employees shall not be required to work with a hazardous  
33 chemical from an unlabeled container except for a portable container intended  
34 for immediate use by the employee who placed the hazardous chemical into the  
35 portable container. For purposes of this subsection, the term "unlabeled

1 container" means a container which is not labeled in accordance with this  
2 section or the Hazard Communication Standard.

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4 SECTION 6. MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS. (a) Chemical manufacturers  
5 and distributors shall provide public employers which purchase a hazardous  
6 chemical from them with an appropriate MSDS prior to or with their initial  
7 shipment of the hazardous chemical and with the first shipment after the MSDS  
8 for the hazardous chemical is updated.

9 (b) Public employers shall maintain the most current MSDS received from  
10 chemical manufacturers or distributors for each hazardous chemical in the  
11 workplace. If an MSDS has not been provided by the chemical manufacturer or  
12 distributor at the time the chemicals are received at the workplace, the  
13 public employer shall request one in writing from the chemical manufacturer or  
14 distributor within five (5) business days.

15 (c) Material safety data sheets shall be readily available, upon  
16 request, to employees and their designated representatives.

17 (d) (1) If an MSDS for a hazardous chemical is not readily available  
18 upon request, an employee or his designated representative may submit a  
19 written request for the MSDS to the public employer. The employer, within  
20 three (3) business days, either shall furnish a copy of the requested MSDS to  
21 the requester; or if the requested MSDS is not in the employer's possession,  
22 shall demonstrate to the requester that the employer has made an effort to  
23 obtain the MSDS from the distributor, manufacturer, or other source.

24 (2) If after two (2) weeks from receipt of the request the public  
25 employer has not furnished the requester with the requested MSDS, the employer  
26 shall not require the employee to work with the hazardous chemical for which  
27 the MSDS was requested until the MSDS is furnished, unless: (A) the  
28 manufacturer of the substance for which the MSDS was requested furnishes a  
29 written statement that the substance is not a hazardous chemical as defined in  
30 Section 3 of this act; or (B) the employer can demonstrate to the employee  
31 that the MSDS cannot be obtained through no fault of the employer; or (C) the  
32 employer can demonstrate to the employee that the MSDS will be furnished by a  
33 date specified by the employer within one (1) additional week, provided that  
34 the employee shall not be required to work with the hazardous chemical if the  
35 MSDS is not furnished by the date specified.

1           (3) If an employee declines to work with a hazardous chemical as  
2 authorized by this subsection, he shall not be penalized. Reassignment of an  
3 employee to other work, at equal pay and benefits, shall not be considered a  
4 penalty under this subsection.

5           (e) A public employer, chemical manufacturer, or distributor shall  
6 provide a copy of an MSDS to the Director upon request.

7           (f) A public employer, chemical manufacturer, or distributor may meet  
8 the requirements of this section with respect to a hazardous chemical which is  
9 a mixture either by providing an MSDS for each element or compound in the  
10 mixture which is a hazardous chemical, or by providing an MSDS for the mixture  
11 itself. If more than one mixture has the same element or compound, only one  
12 MSDS for that element or compound is necessary.

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14           SECTION 7. WORKPLACE CHEMICAL LISTS. (a) Each public employer shall  
15 compile and maintain a workplace chemical list which shall contain the  
16 following information for each hazardous chemical normally used, generated or  
17 stored in the workplace in an amount equal to or greater than fifty-five (55)  
18 gallons or five hundred (500) pounds: (1) the chemical name or common name  
19 used on the MSDS and/or the container label; (2) the Chemical Abstracts  
20 Service number for such hazardous chemical if such number is included on the  
21 MSDS; and (3) the work area or workplace in which the hazardous chemical is  
22 normally used, generated or stored.

23           (b) Each public employer shall file the workplace chemical list with  
24 the Director no later than ninety (90) days after the effective date of this  
25 act, and shall update the list as necessary but in any case by July 1 of each  
26 subsequent year.

27           (c) A public employer may meet the requirements of this section with  
28 respect to a hazardous chemical which is a mixture either by identifying on  
29 the workplace chemical list each element or compound in the mixture which is a  
30 hazardous chemical, or by identifying on the list the mixture itself. If more  
31 than one mixture has the same element or compound, only one listing of the  
32 element or compound is necessary.

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34           SECTION 8. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION AND TRAINING. (a) Each public  
35 employer shall provide an information and training program for its employees

1 as defined in § 3(9) of this act. Additional instruction shall be provided  
2 whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area or whenever new and  
3 significant information is received by the employer concerning the hazards of  
4 a chemical. New or newly assigned employees shall be provided training before  
5 working in a work area containing hazardous chemicals.

6 (b) The information and training program provided pursuant to this  
7 section shall be developed in accordance with regulations to be promulgated by  
8 the Director pursuant to Section 11 within six (6) months after the effective  
9 date of this act. The regulations shall include, at a minimum, requirements  
10 concerning:

11 (1) information on interpreting labels and MSDSs and the  
12 relationship between these two methods of hazard communication;

13 (2) the location and availability of the workplace chemical list  
14 and MSDSs;

15 (3) any operations in an employee's work area where hazardous  
16 chemicals are present;

17 (4) the physical and health hazards of the hazardous chemicals in  
18 the work area;

19 (5) methods and observations that may be used to detect the  
20 presence or release of a hazardous chemical in the work area (such as  
21 monitoring conducted by the employer, continuous monitoring devices, visual  
22 appearance or odor of hazardous chemicals when being released, etc.);

23 (6) the measures employees can take to protect themselves from  
24 these hazards, including specific procedures the employer has implemented to  
25 protect employees from exposure to hazardous chemicals, such as appropriate  
26 work practices, emergency procedures, and personal protective equipment to be  
27 used;

28 (7) frequency of training;

29 (8) general safety instructions on the handling, cleanup, and  
30 disposal of hazardous chemicals; and

31 (9) employees' rights under this act.

32 (c) Training programs addressing each of the requirements of subsection  
33 (b) of this section and conducted in full compliance with Title III of the  
34 federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act of 1986, 42 United  
35 States Code §§ 11001 et seq., shall be deemed to meet the requirements of this

1 section.

2 (d) Public employers shall keep a record of the dates of training  
3 sessions given to their employees.

4 (e) Each public employer shall conduct the initial information and  
5 training program required pursuant to this section within one (1) year after  
6 the effective date of this act. This program may be conducted with the  
7 assistance of the Director pursuant to Section 9 of this act.

8 (f) The Director shall have authority to promulgate rules and  
9 regulations in accordance with Section 11 of this act:

10 (1) to exempt public employers from providing the information and  
11 training otherwise required by this section to employees with special skills  
12 and knowledge concerning hazardous chemicals, if such special skills and  
13 knowledge would make the information and training unnecessary; and

14 (2) to require public employers to provide refresher training for  
15 employees, in workplaces or in circumstances in which the Director reasonably  
16 determines such refresher training to be necessary and appropriate.

17

18 SECTION 9. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF LABOR. (a) The  
19 Director shall develop and give each public employer a suitable form of notice  
20 providing employees with information regarding their rights under this act.

21 (b) The Director shall develop and maintain a general information and  
22 training assistance program to aid public employers. Such information and  
23 assistance shall be made available to all public employers. As part of the  
24 program, the Director may develop and distribute a supply of informational  
25 leaflets on public employers' duties, employees' rights, and the effects of  
26 hazardous chemicals. The Director shall make available the basic materials  
27 for this program within nine (9) months after the effective date of this act.

28 (c) The Director may contract with state universities or other public  
29 or private organizations to develop and implement the outreach program.

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31 SECTION 10. RIGHTS OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. (a) Public employees who may  
32 be exposed to hazardous chemicals shall be informed of such exposure and shall  
33 have access to the workplace chemical list, MSDSs for the chemicals on the  
34 list, and information and training as provided in this act.

35 (b) No public employer shall discharge, or cause to be discharged, or

1 otherwise discipline or discriminate against a public employee because the  
2 employee has requested information, filed a complaint, assisted an inspector  
3 of the Director, or instituted or caused to be instituted any complaint or  
4 proceeding under or related to this act or has testified or is about to  
5 testify in any such proceeding, or has exercised any rights afforded by this  
6 act on behalf of the employee or other employees; nor shall any pay, position,  
7 seniority or other benefits to which the employee may be entitled be lost  
8 because the employee exercised rights afforded by this act.

9 (c) Any waiver of the benefits or requirements of this act shall be  
10 against public policy and shall be null and void. Any public employer's  
11 request or requirement that a person waive any rights under this act as a  
12 condition of or in connection with employment shall constitute a violation.  
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14 SECTION 11. RULEMAKING. (a) The Director may promulgate rules and  
15 regulations in accordance with the provisions of Arkansas Code §§11-2-110,  
16 112 and 113 to implement the provisions of this act. This authority shall  
17 include but not be limited to the authority to implement changes corresponding  
18 to future amendments to the Hazard Communication Standard, to maintain  
19 consistency between this act and the Hazard Communication Standard.

20 (b) The Director shall promulgate regulations within six (6) months  
21 after the effective date of this act requiring public employers to carry out  
22 information and training programs for their employees, and specifying the  
23 minimum content of education and training programs as provided in Section 8 of  
24 this act.

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26 SECTION 12. TRADE SECRETS. (a) A public employer may withhold the  
27 specific chemical identify, including the chemical name and other specific  
28 identification of a hazardous chemical, from an MSDS or workplace chemical  
29 list only if all the following conditions are met:

30 (1) the claim that the information indicates that the specific  
31 chemical identify is being withheld as a trade secret;

32 (2) the MSDS for the chemical indicates that the specific chemical  
33 identify is being withheld as a trade secret;

34 (3) all information contained in the MSDS concerning the  
35 properties and effects of the hazardous chemical is disclosed; and

1 (4) the specific chemical identify is made available to health  
2 professionals, employees, their designated representatives under the same  
3 conditions as are set out in the Hazard Communication Standard, 29 C.F.R. §  
4 1910.1200(i)(2)-(7), provided that information disclosable to OSHA under the  
5 Hazard Communication Standard shall also be disclosable to the Directors.

6 (b) The Director, upon his initiative, or upon request by an employee,  
7 designated representative, or public employer, shall request any or all of the  
8 data substantiating the trade secret claim to determine whether the claim is  
9 valid. The Director shall protect from disclosure all information coming into  
10 his possession that is marked as confidential, and shall return all  
11 information so marked at the conclusion of his determination.

12 (c) Any information marked confidential pursuant to subsection (b)  
13 shall not be disclosed during any administrative or judicial proceeding held  
14 pursuant to this section. Administrative hearings held pursuant to this  
15 section shall not be open to the public, but otherwise shall be held in a  
16 manner consistent with that provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act,  
17 Arkansas Code §§15-15-201 et seq., for hearings in contested cases. The  
18 proponent of disclosure shall also have the right to be heard.

19 (d) No employee of the State of Arkansas shall disclose any information  
20 designated as a trade secret other than within the provisions of this act.

21 (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring the  
22 disclosure under any circumstances of process or percentages of mixture  
23 information that is trade secret.

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25 SECTION 13. COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS. (a) Complaints received  
26 orally or in writing from public employees, their designated representatives,  
27 or public employers related to alleged violations of this act shall be  
28 investigated in a timely manner by the Director.

29 (b) Officers or duly designated representatives of the Director shall  
30 have the right of entry into any workplace or work area of a public employer  
31 during normal business hours to inspect and investigate complaints within  
32 reasonable limits and in a reasonable manner.

33 (c) The Director shall have the same powers, duties and authority to  
34 administer and enforce the provisions of this act as are contained in Arkansas  
35 Code §§11-2-108, 115, 116 and 118, provided however, that if there is a

1 conflict between the provisions of this act and the provisions named above,  
2 the provisions of this act shall prevail.

3

4 SECTION 14. ENFORCEMENT. (a) If the Director determines that a public  
5 employer has violated a provision of this act, the Director shall issue an  
6 order to the official responsible for performing the duties required by this  
7 act, directing that official to cease and desist the act or omission  
8 constituting the violation. Such an order shall constitute prima facie  
9 evidence of a violation in any enforcement action filed pursuant to Section 15  
10 of this act.

11 (b) If the Director determines that a public employer has violated  
12 Section 8 of this act relating to employee information and training, and  
13 within sixty (60) days of issuance of a cease and desist order the public  
14 employer has not remedied the violation, the Director may conduct a program or  
15 programs to remedy the violation and require such public employer to reimburse  
16 the Director for the cost of doing so.

17 (c) Violation of this act by a public employer shall be cause for  
18 adverse personnel action against the supervisor or supervisors responsible for  
19 the violation, including but not limited to suspension, demotion, withholding  
20 of annual career service recognition payments, or in the case of serious and  
21 repeated violations, termination. Issuance of a cease and desist order by the  
22 Director shall not be a prerequisite for such adverse personnel action, but  
23 such action shall only be taken in accordance with the civil service laws and  
24 regulations.

25

26 SECTION 15. CAUSE OF ACTION -- ATTORNEY FEES. (a) Any citizen denied  
27 the rights granted to him by this act may commence a civil action against a  
28 public employer or responsible official of a public employer in the Pulaski  
29 County Circuit Court or the circuit court of the residence of the aggrieved  
30 party, if an agency of the state is involved, or any of the circuit courts of  
31 the appropriate judicial districts when any other public employer is involved.  
32 Issuance of a cease and desist order by the Director shall not be a  
33 prerequisite to the commencement of such an action.

34 (b) Upon written application of the person denied the rights provided  
35 for in this act, or any interested party, the court having jurisdiction shall

1 fix a day the petition is to be heard within seven (7) days of the date of the  
2 application of the petitioner, and shall hear and determine the case.

3 (c) The circuit courts shall have jurisdiction to restrain violations  
4 of this act and to order all appropriate relief, including but not limited to  
5 the disclosure of chemical information, the rehiring or reinstatement of  
6 employees discriminated against because of their exercise of their rights  
7 under this act, and the payment of any compensation such employees actually  
8 lost as a result of such violations.

9 (d) Those who refuse to comply with the orders of the court shall be  
10 found guilty of contempt of court.

11 (e) In any action to enforce the rights granted by this act, or in any  
12 appeal therefrom, the court shall assess against the defendant reasonable  
13 attorney fees and other litigation expenses reasonably incurred by a plaintiff  
14 who has substantially prevailed unless the court finds that the position of  
15 the defendant was substantially justified or that other circumstances make an  
16 award of these expenses unjust. However, no expenses shall be assessed  
17 against the State of Arkansas or any of its agencies or departments. If the  
18 defendant has substantially prevailed in the action, the court may assess  
19 expenses against the plaintiff only upon a finding that the action was  
20 initiated primarily for frivolous or dilatory purposes.

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22 SECTION 16. NO EFFECT ON OTHER LEGAL DUTIES. The provision of  
23 information to a public employee pursuant to the provisions of this act shall  
24 not be construed to affect the liability of a public employer with regard to  
25 the health and safety of an employee or other persons exposed to hazardous  
26 chemicals, nor shall it affect the employer's responsibility to take any  
27 action to prevent the occurrence of occupational disease as required under any  
28 other provision of law. The provision of information to an employee shall not  
29 affect any other duty or responsibility of a chemical manufacturer or  
30 distributor to warn ultimate users of a hazardous chemical under any other  
31 provision of law.

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33 SECTION 17. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent  
34 nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas  
35 Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

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SECTION 18. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

SECTION 19. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 20. EMERGENCY. It is hereby found and determined by the General Assembly that it is essential to provide the public employees of the state with critical information about hazardous chemicals to which they may be exposed. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall take effect on July 1, 1991.

APPROVED: 4/10/91

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