



Changes to the Globally Harmonized System

What You Need to Know

Because of the many different systems for classification and labeling of chemical products, it has been difficult for governments to regulate and enforce proper safety precautions related to chemical products. Therefore, OSHA determined that adhering to a central system of regulation was imperative for the health and safety of workers. The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) is a system that defines and classifies the hazards of chemical products, and communicates health and safety information on labels and material data sheets. Benefits of GHS include:

- Safer work environments for you and your employees.
- Reduced workplace accidents and illness caused by chemical exposure.
- Simplified and consistent communications about substances and safe work practices.
- Greater awareness of hazards resulting in safer use of substances.
- Easier and less costly HazCom compliance.

Why the Changes?

- To align with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) adopted by 67 different nations.
- To provide a common and coherent approach to classifying chemicals.
- To reduce confusion and increase understanding of the hazards.
- To facilitate training and help address literacy problems.

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Who is Affected?

- Manufacturers, Distributors, Importers
- Employers
- Employees

Want to Know More?

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Safety Data Sheets

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires chemical manufacturers, distributors, or importers to provide Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) to communicate the dangers of hazardous chemical products. As of June 1, 2015, the HCS will require that new SDSs be in a uniform format and include the section numbers, headings and associated information under 16 different category headings.

Chemical Classifications

Chemicals will be classified using a harmonized system that provides standardized language for:

- Health Hazard Categories
- Physical Hazard Categories
- Environmental Hazard Categories (not regulated by OSHA)

Previously, chemical hazards were evaluated in a more subjective manner.

Chemicals must now go through a specific, prescriptive classification process to determine which hazards are present and which hazard and precautionary statements apply.



Labels:

OSHA has updated the requirements for labeling of hazardous chemicals under its HCS. As of June 1, 2015, all labels will be required to have pictograms, a signal word, hazard and precautionary statements, the product identifier, and supplier identification.

Labels: Secondary Containers

- Secondary labeling systems are still permitted
- Must be consistent with the revised HazCom standard
- Must not have conflicting hazard warnings or pictograms.
- May use written materials (e.g., signs, placards, etc.) in lieu of affixing labels to individual stationary process containers.
- Employer can use GHS compliant labels (same as shipping)

Key Dates for U.S. Implementation:

- **Dec. 1, 2013** – Train employees on the new label elements and SDS format.
- **June 1, 2015** – Comply with all modified provisions of the final rule (distributors may ship products labeled by manufacturers under the old system until Dec. 1, 2015).
- **June 1, 2016** – Update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication programs as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards.
- **Transition Period** – Comply with either 29 CFR 1910.1200 or the current standard (or both).

