

## WHMIS (after GHS) – why, how, roles and responsibilities

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is Canada's national hazard communication standard. The Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals is a standardized, internationally consistent approach to classifying chemicals according to their physical, health and environmental hazards. GHS covers all hazardous chemical substances and mixtures, and communicates hazard information through labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDSs).

### Why is Canada implementing the GHS?

The GHS helps strengthen worker health and safety, facilitates trade with the U.S., and enhances the competitiveness of Canadian suppliers of workplace chemicals. With the adoption of the GHS in WHMIS, it is now possible to meet Canadian and U.S. requirements using a single label and SDS for most hazardous products.

### How does the GHS enhance workplace safety?

The GHS provides an international standard for the classification and communication of information on hazardous products. For example:

- the standardized hazard symbols, signal words and hazard statements are expected to improve the communication of hazard information;
- the GHS identifies hazards not addressed under the current system, such as aspiration hazards; and,
- more detailed information on hazardous products will be provided to employees and employers.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Suppliers, Employers and Workers

While WHMIS 2015 includes new harmonized criteria for hazard classification and requirements for labels and SDSs, the roles and responsibilities for suppliers, employers and workers have not changed.

Suppliers, defined as persons who, in the course of business, sell or import a hazardous product, will continue to:

- identify whether their products are hazardous products; and,
- prepare labels and SDSs and provide these to purchasers of hazardous products intended for use in a workplace.

Employers will continue to:

- educate and train workers on the hazards and safe use of hazardous products in the workplace;
- ensure that hazardous products are properly labelled;
- prepare workplace labels and SDSs (as necessary); and,
- ensure appropriate control measures are in place to protect the health and safety of workers.

Workers will continue to:

- participate in WHMIS and chemical safety training programs;
- take necessary steps to protect themselves and their co-workers; and,
- participate in identifying and controlling hazards.

source: Health Canada: *The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)* (Backgrounder) Date modified: 2015-02-11

Various posters are available at [www.saswh.ca](http://www.saswh.ca), click on *Resources* then *WHMIS after GHS*.

### Safety Talk Discussion

**Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!**