



WHMIS after GHS

Health Canada has changed the original Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) requirements in Canada that will incorporate the Globally Harmonized System of Classifying and Labelling Workplace Chemicals (GHS) – an internationally agreed-upon hazard communication system developed by the United Nations.

“WHMIS 2015”

WHMIS is a system of combined federal, provincial, and territorial legislation and regulations that first became law in 1988. The main components of WHMIS are hazard identification and product classification, labelling, safety data sheets, and worker education and training. The GHS defines and classifies the hazards of chemical products, and communicates health and safety information on labels and material safety data sheets – referred to as Safety Data Sheets (SDSs). Originally named WHMIS 1988, the system will be referred to as WHMIS 2015 once GHS is incorporated.

WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015

Both the amended *Hazardous Products Act* and the new regulations are currently in force, meaning that suppliers may begin to use and follow the new requirements for labels and SDSs for hazardous products sold, distributed, or imported into Canada. Saskatchewan workplaces and other countries have already adopted GHS in into their hazard classification, labeling, and communication laws for workplaces. While the new system contains new international hazard classifications and labelling requirements, the responsibilities for workers, supervisors and suppliers will remain the same.

A multi-year transition plan to update provincial, federal and territorial occupational health and safety WHMIS regulations will take place from now until May 31, 2017. Until this time, suppliers will be permitted to use either WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015 to classify and label product hazards. Beginning June 1, 2017 and ending in May 31, 2018, both distributors and suppliers importing products for their own use are also permitted to continue using either WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015.

Implementation Timeline

Phase	Timing	Suppliers		Employers
		Manufacturers and Importers	Distributors	
Phase 1	Feb 11, 2015 to May 31, 2017	WHMIS 1988 &/or WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 1988 &/or WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 1988 &/or WHMIS 2015
Phase 2	June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018	WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 1988 &/or WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015
Phase 3	June 1, 2018 to Nov 30, 2018	WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015
Completion	Dec 1, 2018	WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 2015	WHMIS 2015

Source: CCOHS. (2015, May 13). OSH Answers Fact Sheets – WHMIS 2015. Retrieved from Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/whmis_ghs/general.html



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