

WHMIS After GHS: “WHMIS 2015”

The SCSA is in the process of updating its training courses and resources to reflect the changes to 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 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.

Anyone currently certified with the SCSA WHMIS Train-the-Trainer course (all certifications are valid for three years) will continue to maintain their certification until the date of expiry. Once implemented, the new SCSA WHMIS 2015 Train-the-Trainer course will be offered for those wishing to newly certify or recertify.

Some of the Benefits of Aligning WHMIS with GHS

- Provides an internationally comprehensible system for hazard communication
 - Hazard classification criteria are more comprehensive which improves ability to indicate severity of hazards
 - Standardized language (hazard and precautionary statements)
 - Standardized SDS format and more comprehensive requirements
- More efficient import and export of hazardous products
 - Physical hazard criteria are consistent with the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG regulations)
 - Reduces costs and the need for standardized testing and evaluation
 - Encourages safe transport, handling, and use

Transition from 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 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.

Saskatchewan requirements for employers and workers can be found in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996 Part XXII. While legislative changes are underway to include provisions for the transition period from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015, employees will be permitted to use WHMIS controlled products under the following conditions:

1. When an employer receives products with only WHMIS 1988 labels and MSDSs, employees may use the products if they have received training in the requirements of WHMIS 1988
2. When an employer receives products with both WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015 labels as well as MSDSs and SDSs, employees may use the products if they have received training in either WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015

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.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) is offering a free e-course and other resources to explain the expected changes to WHMIS after the adoption of GHS. For a free basic introduction to the expected changes, take the free CCOHS e-course, here: http://ccohs.ca/products/courses/whmis_ghs_intro/

Sources:

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2015, November). WHMIS 2015 – General. Retrieved from http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/whmis_ghs/general.html

Lyth, J. (2015, Fall). WHMIS after GHS. We Build.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan. (2015). WHMIS 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.worksafesask.ca/prevention/whmis2015/>

Implementation Timeline (WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015)

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: www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/whmis_ghs/general.html

Expert Articles: We Build Magazine

The SCSA is regularly featured in the Saskatchewan Construction Association's quarterly *We Build* magazine. *We Build* is circulated to a wide range of business owners, industry and community leaders, Federal members of parliament, and other provincial representatives throughout Saskatchewan. The publication showcases key issues and opinions in Saskatchewan's construction industry.

Recently, the SCSA was featured in three different expert articles for the Fall 2015 issue, including "Safety Management: The Proxy for Organizational Success," authored by SCSA President, Collin Pullar.

This piece discusses the following three distinct performance areas construction industry leaders have worked hard in to turn safety management into their strategic advantage:

- Demonstrated Leadership Commitment
- Development of Knowledge and Expertise; and
- Employee Engagement

"It became apparent that the value of safety and managing safe work practices was not just a socially responsible endeavor but also a strategic business investment benefitting shareholders and the organization as a whole ... safety management in itself is a great proxy for successful management and a dedication to high-performance."

Collin Pullar, SCSA President
We Build (Fall 2015)



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