



WHMIS

After GHS

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System



“WHMIS After GHS” provisional infosheets introduce the components of WHMIS as they may appear once the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is implemented in Canada. This infosheet is intended to be informational and is not final or official. Subscribe to Health Canada’s WHMIS News for updates on implementation: www.whmis.gc.ca.

WHMIS After GHS – An Overview

What is GHS?

GHS is an international initiative to standardize chemical hazard classification and communication globally. The implementation of GHS in WHMIS will help harmonize hazard communication systems worldwide.

WHMIS is a national hazard communication system that provides information on the safe use of hazardous materials in Canadian workplaces. GHS will not replace WHMIS. WHMIS will be modified to incorporate the GHS elements. There will be new **standardized**:

- classification rules
- label requirements
- safety data sheet (SDS) format (formerly material safety data sheet)

Classification

Classification criteria will change in WHMIS after GHS, however all of the existing WHMIS hazard classes will continue but with more specific names. Some new classes will be added, including explosives and aspiration hazards. See the *WHMIS after GHS Hazard Classes* Infosheet for more information.

Hazard communication will be more standardized. Standardized hazard statements, signal words, and symbols/pictograms will be introduced. Precautionary statements may also be prescribed.

Supplier Labels

Supplier labels will have a few new requirements. Most of the label elements will be standardized. Each hazard class and category will have a prescribed signal word, hazard statement and symbol/pictogram. Supplier labels will continue to be required in both English and French. See the *WHMIS after GHS Supplier Labels* Infosheet for more information.

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Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)

Safety data sheets (SDSs) will follow a standard 16-section format with specific information requirements. Changes include providing the WHMIS classification and label information in section 2.

It is anticipated that the SDS updating requirement will continue (every 3 years or when new significant information becomes available). For further information see the *WHMIS after GHS Safety Data Sheets* Infosheet.

Confidential Business Information – Trade Secrets

The current trade secret rules will likely still apply.

Roles, Responsibilities and Duties

The current roles and responsibilities for suppliers, employers and workers likely will not change in WHMIS after GHS.

Suppliers will still classify hazardous products, prepare labels and SDSs, and provide these to customers. See the *WHMIS after GHS Information for Suppliers and Importers* Infosheet for more information.

Employers will still ensure that all hazardous products are properly labelled and make up-to-date SDSs readily available to workers. Employers will also provide worker education and training and ensure appropriate control measures to protect the health and safety of workers. See the *WHMIS after GHS Information for Employers* Infosheet for more information.

Workers will still participate in WHMIS training programs, take necessary steps to protect themselves and their coworkers, and participate in identifying and controlling hazards.

Timeline

Full implementation, including regulatory modifications, has taken Canada beyond the original 2008 target. An interim policy has been established to permit use of GHS-formatted safety data sheets in Canada. Additional interim policies will be developed to facilitate transition to GHS in WHMIS.