

## The New Globally Harmonized System (GHS): Changes to the Hazard Communication Standard

On March 20, 2012, the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) revised the Hazard Communication Standard to align the regulation with the provisions of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). These changes will impact all users of hazardous chemicals at the University. The Hazard Communication Standard has been in place since 1983 and was designed to ensure manufacturers and importers evaluate the chemicals they produce and that this information concerning the hazards are transmitted to employers and employees through labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). The standard also addresses chemical inventories, written plans and training.

### What are the major changes to the Hazard Communication Standard?

#### *Safety Data Sheets (SDS):*



The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) will be replaced with a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) which will have 16 sections in an established format.

#### *Hazard classification:*

The physical and health hazards of each chemical (and chemical mixtures) have to be identified by the manufacturer using specific criteria for classification. There are criteria established for 16 physical hazards and 10 health hazards.

#### *Labels:*

Chemical manufacturers are required to provide a label that includes the chemical name, a harmonized signal word indicating the relative degree of severity of a hazard (such as “danger” and “warning”), pictogram and hazard statement for each hazard class and category. Precautionary statements must also be used. The manufacturer name, address and phone number must be included and all this must be in a consistent format.

	<b>ToxiFlam (Contains: XYZ)</b>	
<b>Danger! Toxic If Swallowed, Flammable Liquid and Vapor</b>		
Do not eat, drink or use tobacco when using this product. Wash hands thoroughly after handling. Keep container tightly closed. Keep away from heat/sparks/open flame. – No smoking. Wear protective gloves and eye/face protection. Ground container and receiving equipment. Use explosion-proof electrical equipment. Take precautionary measures against static discharge. Use only non-sparking tools. Store in cool/well-ventilated place.		
<b>IF SWALLOWED:</b> Immediately call a POISON CONTROL CENTER or doctor/physician. Rinse mouth.		
In case of fire, use water fog, dry chemical, CO <sub>2</sub> , or “alcohol” foam.		
See Material Safety Data Sheet for further details regarding safe use of this product		
MyCompany, MyStreet, MyTown, NJ 00000, Tel: 444 999 9999		

Example of a New Chemical Label

*Information and Training:*

The new GHS changes do not address training but the adoption of the new regulation will require training to ensure that workers can recognize and understand the new labels and Safety Data Sheets.

**What does this mean to UW-Madison?**

First, manufacturers will start sending the new Safety Data Sheets with shipments of materials. Chemical manufacturers and importers must classify the chemicals they produce and create a new label and SDS by **June 1, 2015**. Distributors may ship chemicals labeled by manufacturers under the old system until **December 1, 2015**. For a while you may be receiving shipments with new or old labels and with either MSDSs or SDSs, depending on whether the manufacturer has switched over yet. Each existing MSDS must be replaced by the new Safety Data Sheet when they are received.

Secondly, as mentioned above, all employees will need to have their training updated so that they will be able to understand the new labels and Safety Data Sheets. Employers must train workers on the new label and Safety Data Sheets by **December 1, 2013**.

Finally, by **June 1, 2016**, employers must update their workplace labeling systems and written plans and provide additional worker training on newly identified physical and health hazards.

**More Info on Global Harmonization**

GHS is a harmonized system agreed on at an international level by governments and adopted by the United Nations in 2002. The harmonized standard requires manufacturers and importers to classify their chemicals and mixtures according to 16 physical hazards & 10 health hazards and then establish specifically formatted shipping labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). This includes all chemicals made in the United States or imported from abroad. Presently, there are over 31 countries participating in the harmonizing efforts.

The GHS benefits include consistency and quality of information by adopting a standardized worldwide approach for chemical classification, standardized labels and Safety Data Sheets. The intent is also to facilitate international trade.

April 2012

**For More Information Contact:**

**Environment, Health and Safety Department**  
30 East Campus Mall, Madison, WI 53715-1227  
**Phone** (608) 265-5000 · **Fax** (608) 262-6767;  
The Chemical Safety Office