

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Hazard Communication Fact Sheet
For Non Lab Workplaces

The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) was written and enacted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 1983 and enforced in the State of Wisconsin by the Wisconsin Department of Safety & Professional Services (WI Statutes 101.055). It is based on a simple concept – *that employees have both a need and a right to know the hazards and identities of the chemicals that they are exposed to when working.*

On March 20, 2012, there were changes made to the Hazard Communication Standard. The standard was aligned with the UN Globally Harmonized System of Classification & Labeling of Chemicals or GHS. This includes changes in the classification of chemicals, the shipped label and Material Safety Data Sheets are now Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

There are six elements of the HCS which include hazard classification, chemical inventory, labeling (shipping & workplace), Safety Data Sheets (SDS), employee training and written program.

Hazard Classification

- Hazard classification is the responsibility of the chemical manufacturers and importers who evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import according to their physical and health hazards. Using this information, they then create the shipping label and SDS.
- With each shipment, chemicals are labeled, tagged or marked.
- Chemical manufacturers and importers must ensure that a SDS is sent with each initial shipment and an updated SDS sent within three months after changes are made.

Chemical Inventory

- Employer creates and maintains a current list of all chemicals used and stored in the workplace.
- The chemical name on the inventory must be the same as the chemical name on the label and SDS. Include the location of each chemical with building, floor and room number and the manufacturers contact information.
- This inventory becomes part of the written Hazard Communication Program.

Labeling

- Shipping labels (GHS label) are developed by the manufacturer with the identity of the hazardous chemical, manufacturer's name, address and phone, pictograms, signal words, hazard statements and precautionary statements (six sections).
- The labels must be legible, in English and prominently displayed.
- If the chemical is transferred by the employer to a secondary container, the employer will need to label the container (workplace label) unless it is subject to the portable container exemption. Workplace labels may either be the GHS (shipped) label or contain the name of the chemical and words, pictures, symbols or a combination which provides specific information regarding the physical and health hazards of the chemical.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

- Chemical manufacturers are required to develop a Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for each chemical they produce or import. By 6-1-15, the manufacturer of the chemical is to utilize the 16 section SDS.
- The SDS must be in English and sent with initial shipments. If changes are made to the SDS, this new information must be added within three months and the new SDS provided to employers.
- The SDS must be readily available during each shift and in each work area. It provides detailed information on the chemical hazards associated with the chemical.
- The 16 section SDS includes information such as chemical name, hazard identification, composition/ingredients, first aid, firefighting and accidental release measures, handling & storage, exposure controls, personal protection, physical & chemical properties, stability & reactivity, toxicology, ecological, regulatory & transportation information, disposal consideration and other information including the date of preparation.

Employee Information and Training

- For their safety and health, employees need to be provided with information and training on the hazardous chemicals they work with.
- This should occur at both initial assignment and whenever a chemical is changed or introduced.
- Information to be provided includes the location of the written program, SDS and chemical inventory.
- Training includes understanding and interpreting SDS, physical and health hazards of the chemicals, how to prevent and reduce exposures, personal protective equipment (PPE), work practices that may result in exposures, procedures to follow if exposures occur and emergency response procedures.
- By 12-1-13, employees must be trained on the new GHS label and SDS format and by 6-1-16 employees must be trained on the newly identified GHS physical & health hazards of the chemicals they work with.
- Training should be documented and retained.

Written Hazard Communication Program

- Summary document that describes how program elements will be met.
- Information included are identification of designated persons with responsibility for administration, SDS, labeling as well as chemical inventory, container labeling, employee access to SDS, employee information and training, non-routine tasks, contractor employees and multi-employer worksites.
- Plan must be made available to employees and evaluated annually.

Hazard Communication Checklist for Compliance

- Obtain a copy of the regulation.**
- Read and understand the requirements.**
- Assign responsibility for tasks.**
- Prepare a chemical inventory.**
- Ensure that containers are labeled.**
- Obtain SDS for each chemical.**
- Prepare a written program.**
- Make SDS available to workers.**
- Conduct training of workers.**
- Establish procedures to maintain current program.**
- Establish procedures to evaluate effectiveness.**

Reference: www.osha.gov (Hazard Communication Standard 1910.1200)