

## GLOBALY-HARMONIZED WHMIS

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

## TRAINING

▶ THE RIGHT THING. THE RIGHT WAY.

## Transitioning to Globally-Harmonized WHMIS

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act (the Act)* gives workers a legal right to know about hazards on the job and the duty to report hazards of which they are aware to their supervisor or employer.

Ontario's Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) Regulation establishes more specific right to know provisions pertaining to hazardous products used, stored, handled or disposed of in the workplace. These provisions are based on Canada's Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, commonly known as WHMIS.

WHMIS is mandated by federal, provincial and territorial law. The main purpose of federal WHMIS legislation is to require suppliers of hazardous products to provide health and safety information as a condition of sale. Provincial legislation establishes employer duties to obtain this information and ensure workers have access and understand it.

Ontario, and other jurisdictions across Canada, are currently modifying WHMIS regulations to incorporate elements of the new Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). These modifications are expected to standardize chemical hazard classification and communication on a global scale. This will result in new:

- ▶ hazard classes (including pictograms—formerly called WHMIS hazard symbols)
- ▶ hazardous product labels, and
- ▶ safety data sheets (SDSs—formerly called material safety datasheets—MSDSs).

What won't change are the extensive supplier and employer obligations designed to ensure workers have access to and understand this information.

### Suppliers of a hazardous product must:

- ▶ determine the classification of a hazardous product,
- ▶ provide a label complying with specific requirements in English and French, and
- ▶ provide SDSs in English and French.

### Employers must:

- ▶ provide information, instruction and supervision to workers to protect their health and safety [the Act, s. 25(2)(a)],
- ▶ assess all biological and chemical agents produced in the workplace for use therein to determine if they are hazardous materials,
- ▶ ensure a hazardous product is properly labelled,
- ▶ ensure workers (and other workplace parties) have access to up-to-date SDSs, and
- ▶ educate workers exposed to or working near hazardous materials.

With the transition to GHS WHMIS lasting until December, 2018, workplaces may have both original WHMIS labels and MSDSs as well as new labels and SDSs present in the workplace. If this is the case, employers must train workers in both systems. GHS WHMIS can become the sole focus of worker training only when all products with the original WHMIS labels and MSDSs are no longer used in the workplace.

**The flip side of this Right to Know resource can be posted in your workplace as a reminder of legal requirements to train workers and properly communicate information relating to the safe use, handling and storage of hazardous materials.**

Want to learn more about WHSC information and training resources? Visit our website or call us toll-free and ask to speak to a training service representative.

**Workers Health  
& Safety Centre**

# YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

## Globally-Harmonized WHMIS

### GHS WHMIS HAZARD PICTOGRAMS

Environmental (aquatic) toxicity*		Flammable, self-reactive, pyrophoric, self-heating, emits flammable gas (in contact with water), organic peroxides
Serious eye damage, skin corrosion, corrosive to metals		Oxidizers (can burn without air)
Irritation, skin sensitizer, acute toxicity, target organ toxicity		Carcinogen, reproductive toxicity, respiratory sensitizer, target organ toxicity, mutagen, aspiration hazard
Self-reactive, organic peroxides		Gas under pressure
Acute toxicity (severe)		Biohazardous infectious materials
		

\*optional (not required by GHS WHMIS)

### GHS WHMIS Training Requirements

Employers have specific legal duties to ensure hazard information is effectively communicated to their workers. The provision of WHMIS training to all workers exposed or likely to be exposed to hazardous materials is an essential component of this duty.

This WHMIS training must be developed and implemented in consultation with the joint health and safety committee or representative.

If you answer no to any of the following questions you may need WHMIS training or WHMIS refresher training. Likely your existing workplace WHMIS program also needs to be reviewed.

	YES	NO
Can you name the three ways GHS WHMIS information is shared?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you understand the GHS WHMIS pictograms (opposite)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you name required signal words for workplace/product labels and explain their differences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what a safety data sheet is?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know where you can find a safety data sheet in your workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you been trained in the safe use, handling, storage and disposal of hazardous products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what to do in case of an accidental release or an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your workplace WHMIS program been reviewed in the last year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: If original WHMIS labels and MSDSs are still in use in your workplace along with new labels and SDSs, be sure to post this poster and the WHSC's original poster entitled, *Understanding Your Right to Know & WHMIS* in your workplace.

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Want to learn more?