Background

The Federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has made changes to the Globally Harmonized System of Federal Hazard Communication Standard based on the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).

These changes are intended to improve comprehension of hazard information found on product labels. Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) will replace the current Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs). The ultimate goal of these changes is to more effectively prevent injuries and illnesses and save lives.

Q: What is the Global Harmonization System (GHS)?
A: GHS is an international System used to classify hazardous chemicals and standardize hazard information on product labels and safety data sheets, called SDSs.

Q: What is a Safety Data Sheet?
A: A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is replacing the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) as the primary source for detailed hazard information about chemical products. SDSs follow a standardized format while MSDSs are permitted to take on a variety of formats. The consistent format of SDSs is expected to increase familiarity so that employees can find information easily, especially in emergency situations. To see what is included in one, visit the OSHA website at: www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm_QuickCard_SafetyData.html

Q: Who is impacted by the GHS-Based changes?
A: All employers and chemical manufacturers, importers, and distributors who are subject to Hazard Communication rules will need to adapt to the new GHS—Based rules.

Q: What about my old MSDSs? Do I need to keep them?
A: You need to keep them until you phase out of your current stock of chemicals, and then replace them with each chemical's new SDS, if a new SDS is sent to you or becomes available.

Q: How will labels change?
A: The information on labels will become more standardized to increase employee comprehension of the potential hazards and precautions. New labels will feature:

• Hazard Pictograms (framed by a red border)
• A signal word, such as DANGER
• Hazard and Precautionary Statements
• A Product Identifier and a Supplier Identifier

For more information, visit the EH&S website at: http://www.ehs.iastate.edu/occupational/right-to-know
When does GHS go into effect?
The table below summarizes the phase—in dates required under the revised Hazard Communication Standard (HCS):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Completion Date</th>
<th>Requirement(s)</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1, 2013</td>
<td>Train employees on the new label elements and safety data sheet</td>
<td>Employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1, 2015</td>
<td>Compliance with all modified provisions of this final rule, except:</td>
<td>Chemical Manufacturers, Importers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The distributor shall not ship containers labeled by the chemical manufacturer or importer unless it is a GHS label</td>
<td>Distributors, Employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1, 2015</td>
<td>Update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication program as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards</td>
<td>Employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1, 2016</td>
<td>Complete Training online by October 1, 2013.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ehs.iastate.edu">www.ehs.iastate.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online Courses available by October 1, 2013.</td>
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Other Resources
A Guide to The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS):
http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/ghs.html

Social Media
For more news and information on GHS, follow EH&S in social media. Post a question on Facebook or tweet us a question on Twitter! We’re here to help!