
ASCIPI INFORMATION BULLETIN

Date: September 16, 2013

Attention: ASCIP Members

Subject: The Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for Hazard Classification and Labeling

Applicability: K-12 Districts and Community College Districts

The new Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) is an international initiative to standardize chemical classification and hazardous chemical communication (labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). This new system will affect everyone who manufacturers, transports and handles any chemicals.

No country has the ability to identify and specifically regulate every hazardous chemical product. Previously, US Regulatory agencies' regulations were not domestically harmonized – each regulatory agency had pursued independent regulations that differed from each other. Domestic chemical producers had to classify and create multiple labels for the same products. These agencies included [Cal-OSHA](#), [ANSI](#), [DTSC](#) (Cal-EPA), [DOT](#), [CPSC](#), [SFM](#) and [NFPA](#).

What is the GHS? An international common and coherent approach that not only defines and classifies hazards, but communicates the same information on labels and SDS.

What is the scope of the GHS? GHS covers all hazardous chemical substances, dilute solutions, and mixtures.

What is changing?

Uniformity-Oriented Approach

- Classification of Hazardous Materials
- Presentation of Information
 - New labeling system
 - “Material Safety Data Sheets” (MSDS) is now “Safety Data Sheets” (SDS) with more information

Protections will not be reduced. All types of chemicals will be covered; and will be based on the hazards of the chemicals. All regulatory systems will have to be updated.

OSHA has modified only the provisions of the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) that must be changed to align with the GHS. Cal/OSHA adopted GHS on May 5, 2013 resulting in changes to California Code of Regulations Title 8 section 5194. Proposition (Prop) 65 also remains in section 5194.



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- The basic framework of the HCS remains the same.
- Chemical manufacturers and importers are responsible for providing chemical hazard information.
- All employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplace are still required to have a hazard communication program.

LABELING: Labels are still required, but now the elements are standardized. Labeling is already changing as many companies import and export on international levels, so you may already be seeing new chemical labels with pictograms. Labels are more defined. Chemical manufacturers and importers will be required to provide a label that includes the following harmonized elements:

- Product identifiers such as pictogram, signal word, hazard statement(s), precautionary statement(s), supplier identifier, name, address and telephone number.
- Label Signal Words will no longer use the word “Caution.” Labels will say either “Danger” or “Warning”. “Danger” being the more severe warning of the two.
- Overall goal is to ensure the safe use of chemicals, by providing practical, reliable, consistent and comprehensible information to the users.

SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDS): The SDS should provide comprehensive information about a chemical substance or mixture. Employers and workers use the SDS as a source of information about hazards and to obtain advice on safety precautions.

- Standardized the format and changed the name from MSDS to SDS.
- Now includes a 16-section safety data sheet.

TRAINING: Employers must train employees on the new label elements and the SDS format.

- This training is considered an awareness level training. Please note that some companies are already using the new labeling system.
- Although the training under HCS remains essentially the same, updates include:
 - Label elements and new safety data sheet format by December 1, 2013.
 - Training to reflect any new hazards identified in the workplace by June 1, 2016.

ASCP recommends that all schools and school districts:

- Train their teachers and staff on how to read GHS labels and SDS's by December 1, 2013. **ASCP will be providing a GHS webinar on Tuesday, September 17, 2013 from 9am-11am.**
- Additionally, schools and school districts must update alternative workplace labeling hazard communication programs as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards by June 1, 2016.

Please contact ASCP staff at (562) 404-8029 should you have any questions or need additional assistance.

Internet Resources:

Details and brief summaries on the changes are available at the Federal OSHA website
<https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/index.html>

A free training on GHS is also available through Flinn Scientific, Inc.
<http://www.flinnsci.com/> (Please note that registration is required on their website to view the training videos, but is free).



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