

Occupational Health and Safety Bulletin



Changes to WHMIS Legislation

This document is intended to provide Alberta employers and workers with an update on changes to WHMIS legislation. It is important for employers and workers to be aware of the changes that are coming as they will have a significant impact on WHMIS in the workplace.

WHMIS is the system in Canada used for classifying and labelling hazardous workplace chemicals (“controlled products”). This system is being updated to align with the Globally Harmonized System for Classifying and Labelling Chemicals (GHS). Countries around the world are adopting a consistent system to enable a single international system for chemical classification and labelling. Both the European Union and the United States are well on their way to implementing changes consistent with GHS and Canada is doing the same. Once updated, the system will continue to be called WHMIS in Canada (WHMIS 2015).

WHMIS is enabled by both federal and provincial legislation. Federally, the *Hazardous Products Act (HPA)* and Controlled Products Regulations cover suppliers of hazardous chemicals in Canada. In Alberta, the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code; Part 29 contains the requirements for employers and workers.

Health Canada, the federal government department responsible for WHMIS, has amended the current federal WHMIS legislation to align with GHS. The amended legislation will go into force in February 2015. Alberta is in the process of amending Part 29 of the OHS Code to be consistent with the federal legislation; however, it may take up to a year for these changes to occur. As a result, there will be a period of time before the OHS Code requirements will be in step with the federal law



There have been significant changes to the federal WHMIS legislation:

- “Controlled Products” will be called “Hazardous Products”
- Different hazard classes and more of them.
- Different classification criteria
- New supplier labels
- New pictograms
- New 16-section product safety data sheets (SDSs)
- No requirement to update SDSs every three years

Changes to labels will be the most visible change in workplaces. More information on how label content compares between WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015 is included in Appendix A.

Once the federal law is in-force, there will be approximately a **three-year transition** period during which suppliers can provide (material) safety data sheets and labels that comply with either system. The provinces and territories are currently working on harmonizing with the federal transition plan to enable a seamless update to the new WHMIS in the workplace. Proposed amendments to Alberta’s OHS Code, Part 29 will allow employers to comply with either (or both) systems during the transition period.

For more information:

Health Canada website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/whmis-simdut/ghs-sgh/index-eng.php>



















National WHMIS Information Webpage: www.whmis.org

Appendix A: Comparison of Old and New Label Content

WHMIS Label Content

WHMIS 1988	WHMIS 2015
Product Identifier	Product Identifier
Supplier Identifier	Supplier Identifier
Pictogram	Pictogram
Risk Phrases	Hazard Statement
NA	Signal Word
Precautionary Measures	Precautionary Statements
First Aid Statement	Part of Precautionary Statement
Hatched Border	No

WHMIS Pictograms

WHMIS 1988 Hazard Class	WHMIS 1988 Symbols	WHMIS 2015 Symbol(s)	WHMIS 2015 Hazard Class
A			Gases Under Pressure
B1 to B6			Flammables, Self-Heating, Emit Flammable Gases, Pyrophoric Gases, Liquids & Solids Organic Peroxides
C			Oxidizing Gases, Liquids, Solids
D1			Acute Toxicity - Oral, Dermal, Inhalation
D2			Eye Irritation, Skin Irritation Skin/Respiratory Sensitization, Carcinogenicity Mutagenicity Reproductive Hazards
D3			Biohazardous Infectious Materials
E			Skin/Eye Corrosion Corrosive to Metals
F			Self-Reactive Substances Organic Peroxides
N/A	N/A		Explosive Substances (Explosives are still covered under WHMIS exclusions for now)
N/A	N/A		Aspiration, STOT (Single Exposure, Repeated Exposure)
N/A	N/A	N/A	Combustible Dusts
N/A	N/A	N/A	Simple Asphyxiants
N/A	N/A	Use appropriate symbol	Physical Hazards Not Otherwise Classified, Health Hazards Not Otherwise Classified

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Web Site



www.work.alberta.ca

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Occupational Health and Safety



<http://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety/295.html>



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