

New rules for WHMIS in 2015

On February 11, 2015, Health Canada announced that the revised *Hazardous Products Act* and the new Hazardous Products Regulations would now be law in Canada.

In 2014, Health Canada amended its *Hazardous Products Act* and introduced the new Hazardous Products Regulations. This new legislation governs the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) in all Canadian workplaces. It also establishes new rules for classifying and labelling hazardous occupational materials and new information for safety data sheets under the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).

The Act and Regulations will regulate suppliers (importers, manufacturers, and distributors), while WorkSafeBC will continue to regulate WHMIS requirements in workplaces.

In addition to these federal legislative changes, WorkSafeBC is proposing similar amendments to the provincial Occupational Health and Safety Regulation by June 2015 (see the [public hearing information on the proposed amendments](#)).

The original WHMIS, developed in 1988, is not being replaced. Rather, it has been updated to reflect elements of the globally harmonized system. As of 2015, the new WHMIS program aligns Canada's occupational hazard classification and communication requirements with those used by the United States and other major trading partners.

WHMIS 2015 is the result of a collaborative effort between the federal, provincial, and territorial occupational health and safety agencies, and includes input from supplier, employer, and worker representatives.

In order to allow time for partners and stakeholders to uniformly adopt the new requirements, WHMIS 2015 will be implemented in three phases. The first phase begins with the introduction of the amended *Hazardous Products Act* and new Hazardous Products Regulations, with the second and third phases of implementation expected to be concluded by December 2018.

During the first phase, specific controlled or hazardous products must comply with either WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015 requirements. In other words, the supplier must choose which classification, label, and material safety data sheet to follow, rather than trying to abide by both sets of requirements.

You can find information about the changes to WHMIS on Health Canada's website at WHMIS.gc.ca, or at the new, nationally coordinated web portal, WHMIS.org, which provides useful links to WHMIS resources across Canada. You can also seek training through the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, which offers a free online course, [WHMIS \(After GHS\) for Workers](#), as well as other [eCourses on WHMIS](#).

For more information about the new WHMIS requirements, contact WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 or toll-free in B.C. at 1.888.621.7233.

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