

# The Globally Harmonized System (GHS)



## Effective hazard communication through the standardization of hazard classification, labeling and safety data sheets (SDS).

This standard was negotiated and adopted by the United Nations and is based on many existing systems from around the world, including OSHA's HCS.

GHS provides a common method for classifying, labeling, and delivering information about the hazards of a material. Many countries around the world have already implemented the GHS. Its widespread use and standardized approach offers the following benefits:

- Increased safety and health for affected employees
- Reduced accidents, fatalities, injuries and illnesses associated with hazardous chemicals
- Increased quality and consistency of information provided to workers, employers and users
- Reduced confusion
- Increased comprehension of hazards and control
- Improved downstream risk management
- Improved training
- Decreased instances of risk due to illiteracy
- Improved facilitation of international trade of chemicals



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## THE BENEFITS OF GLOBAL HARMONIZATION

Many different countries currently have different systems for classification and labeling of chemical products. In addition, several different systems can exist even within the same country. This situation has been expensive for governments to regulate and enforce, costly for companies who have to comply with many different systems, and confusing for workers who need to understand the hazards of a chemical in order to work safely.

The GHS promises to deliver several distinct benefits. Among them are:

- Promoting regulatory efficiency
- Facilitating trade
- Easing compliance
- Reducing costs
- Providing improved, consistent hazard information
- Encouraging the safe transport, handling and use of chemicals
- Promoting better emergency response to chemical incidents
- Reducing the need for animal testing

### The Most Notable Changes With the New Regulations

- Labeling
- Pictograms
- Safety data sheets
- Hazard classification
- Hazard categories

### What Must A Company Do To Be Compliant?

Employers must ensure that their written hazard communication programs are up-to-date and include:

- A list of the present hazardous chemicals by using the product identifier referenced on safety data sheets
- Labels and other forms of warning
- Safety data sheets
- Employee information
- Employee training
- Methods that will be used to inform employees of the hazards of non-routine tasks
- Availability of the program

### When Must A Company Be Compliant With the GHS Standards?

Employers must train employees on the new label elements and safety data sheet format by December 1, 2013.



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