



Hazard Communication and the Globally Harmonized System (GHS)

Related keywords: chemical hazard communication, Globally Harmonized System - GHS

- Overview
- Rules & Requirements
- Training & Videos
- Other Resources

Thousands of products and materials found in today's workplaces contain hazardous chemicals that can cause health problems from minor skin irritations to serious injuries or diseases like cancer.

Hazard communication rules were developed to make sure information about inherently hazardous chemicals is provided to employers and ultimately to employees so they become informed about chemical hazards found in the workplace. These rules apply if you:

- Have employees with potential for exposure to hazardous chemicals at work.
- Distribute hazardous chemicals to employers.
- Manufacture (produce) or import hazardous chemicals.



Training employees about the hazards of chemicals they work with and around helps them to understand why safe work procedures are critical to prevent risk for injury and illness.

Washington State's Hazard Communication (GHS) Rule, Chapter 296-901, WAC became effective April 15, 2013.

The **Globally Harmonized System (GHS)** of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals has already been incorporated into federal OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard. As a result, you may see new labels on shipped containers of chemicals that display the GHS pictograms and information. Also, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) are starting to be phased out and replaced by newly required Safety Data Sheets (SDSs). Although content details on labels and SDSs are affected by the GHS, many of the current requirements are not changing. For example, requirements to distribute SDSs, label workplace containers, and train employees will remain the same.

To learn more about GHS in Washington State, read [Questions and Answers: Hazard Communication Standard](#) or view the [Hazard Communication/GHS Rules Update eLesson](#). To learn more about how GHS started, visit [OSHA's webpage](#).

Washington State's new Hazard Communication Standard, WAC 296-901-140, is substantially identical to OSHA's rule and compliance in our state will be phased in on the following schedule:

Who	What	By
Employers	Train employees on the safety data sheet (SDS) format and new label elements .	June 1, 2014
Chemical manufacturers and importers	Comply with new SDS and label requirements.	June 1, 2015
Distributors	Not to ship unless container has GHS (Global Harmonization System) label .	December 1, 2015
Employers	Update labels on "workplace" containers and train employees on newly identified hazards. Update the Hazard Communication Program , as needed.	June 1, 2016
All	<p>Until the dates listed in this table you may comply with the:</p> <p>New requirements in WAC 296-901-140.</p> <p>And/OR</p> <p>Current hazard communication rules.</p>	