

prensa update

February 2017

GHS is here.

The 5-year GHS changeover period ended on January 1st, 2017. So what does that mean for your business?

What is it?

The Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is a universal methodology to identify the hazards associated with the various chemicals we use. It is a system set out by the United Nations which has been designed to apply globally. The GHS has been set up to present easy to understand, and consistent information, no matter where a chemical has been manufactured or where it is to be used.

Where is it mandatory?

The GHS is mandatory in states that have adopted the WHS regulations. For Victoria, Western Australia and ACT you have the option to utilise the GHS or to remain with the existing systems of classification.

It should be noted that information provided by the ACT Government indicates that as of July 1st, 2017, chemicals in Canberra will be required to comply with the GHS.

What differences will I be seeing?

Instead of displaying the Australian Dangerous Goods (ADG) style symbols, chemical packaging will now display the GHS pictograms.



Whilst similar to the ADG symbols, there are changes and the inclusion of several new hazards, including environmental hazards.



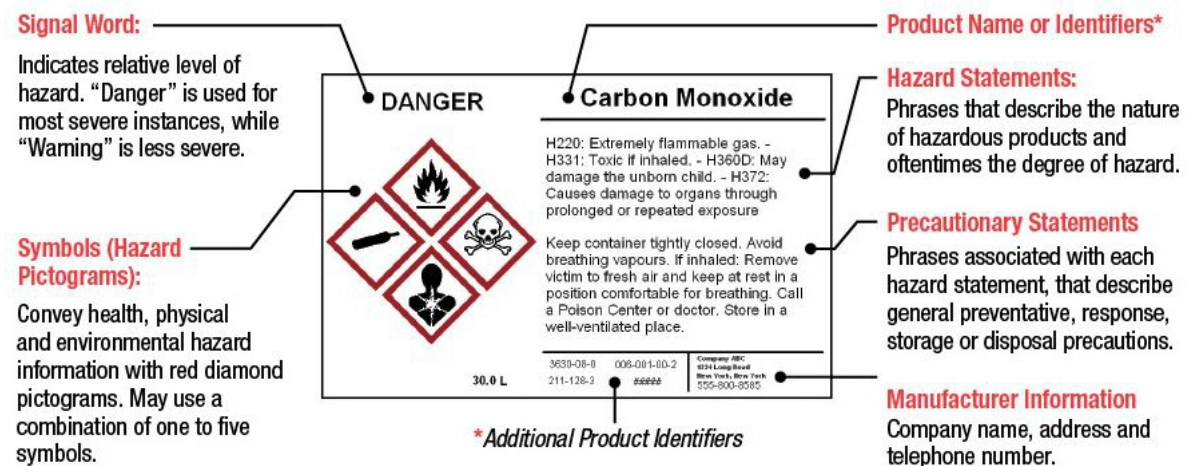
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Safety Data Sheets (SDS) will now come in a slightly different format. The main change will be seen in Section 2 of the SDS which will now include GHS pictograms and new hazard descriptors:

- Hazard Category (e.g. Serious Eye Damage Category 1, Flammable Aerosols Category 2);
- Signal Word (i.e. Warning, Danger); and
- Hazard Statement (e.g. Extremely flammable gas, Heating may cause an explosion, Toxic if swallowed).

These hazard descriptors replace the older style 'risk phrase' and 'safety phrase' previously used in Section 2 of an SDS



What do I need to do now?

Labelling

Manufacturers and Suppliers

Manufacturers and suppliers of chemicals have responsibilities to provide labelling that is compliant with the requirements in any state which that product will be distributed to. The 5-year changeover period allowed manufacturers and suppliers to design, prepare and distribute new labels. Products with this type of labelling will already be in circulation.

Existing stocks, labelled under the previous requirements, do not need to have their labels updated.

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End users of chemicals

Users of chemicals who may have existing stocks, with older style labelling, have no responsibilities to update the labels into the new format, so long as the current labels are effective at communicating the product's hazards (i.e. legible and risk levels stated).

The new labelling system and pictograms may not be readily understood by persons using the chemicals potentially resulting in harm to health and/or the environment. Employers will therefore need to provide adequate training and instruction on the new labelling system and pictograms to persons handling chemicals.

SDS

During the 5-year changeover period, manufacturers and suppliers have been encouraged to update their SDS into the new, SafeWork Australia – GHS format.

In each state, users of chemicals have duties to provide accessible and current SDS. If you haven't updated your database of SDS in 2017, it's possible you do not have the current version.

Users of chemicals should undertake a review of their SDS to ensure that they are all present and are provided in the new GHS format. Suppliers and manufacturers have duties to provide the SDS, so where you can't locate an updated version, you should contact your chemical supplier.

Placarding

No changes are required to be made to placard designs in any state. Under the model WHS regulations, Schedule 13 – placard requirements, the design of information (diamond) placards is to remain in accordance with the ADG code and symbols.

It's noted that sites which exceed the placarding thresholds for their state will be required to display placards of a different design to the GHS pictograms displayed on the packaging label.

For further information on the GHS please contact:

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