

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized
System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

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Implementation of the GHS:

Reports on the status of implementation

Implementation of the GHS in Canada

Transmitted by the expert from Canada

Introduction

1. On December 7, 2011, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, and the President of the United States of America (U.S.), Barack Obama, announced the Joint Action Plan for Canada-U.S. Regulatory Cooperation Council and made a commitment to align and synchronize implementation of common classification and labelling requirements for workplace hazardous chemicals. This announcement committed Canada to the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals for workplace chemicals in Canada by June 1, 2015.

2. On February 11, 2015, the Government of Canada published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II the *Hazardous Products Regulations* (HPR) (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2015-17/index.html>), which, in addition to the amendments made to the *Hazardous Products Act* (HPR) (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/H-3/>) under the *Economic Action Plan 2014 Act, No.1*, modified the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) to incorporate the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) for workplace chemicals. This modified WHMIS is referred to as WHMIS 2015. The old system is referred to as WHMIS 1988.

3. While WHMIS 2015 includes new harmonized criteria for hazard classification and requirements for labels and safety data sheets (SDS), the roles and responsibilities for suppliers, employers and workers have not changed.

4. To provide suppliers, employers and workers time to adjust to WHMIS 2015, there is a transition period (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/whmis-simdut/transition/index-eng.php>). During this period, suppliers are allowed to either continue to comply with WHMIS 1988, or they must comply with WHMIS 2015. However, the supplier must fully comply with either WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015 for a specific controlled or hazardous product. The classification, label and (material) SDS must comply fully with either WHMIS 1988 or WHMIS 2015, and not a combination of the two.

5. Technical guidance is a key component of GHS implementation and is a primary tool to communicate and facilitate Canada-U.S. alignment of the GHS for workplace chemicals, without reducing the level of safety or of protection to workers. Canada is pursuing a phased approach for the release of the technical guidance. Further information regarding technical guidance can be found at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/whmis-simdut/index-eng.php>.