

Occupational Health and Safety Bulletin



Transition from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015

The federal Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) legislation was amended February 11, 2015 to align with the Globally Harmonized System for Classifying and Labelling Chemicals (GHS). Alberta will amend the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code, Part 29 to be consistent with the federal legislation. In the interim, this bulletin is intended to provide Alberta employers and workers with guidance on complying with WHMIS until the provincial OHS legislation is amended.

During the transition period, suppliers of "hazardous products" will be allowed to comply with the old system (WHMIS 1988) or the new (WHMIS 2015). All suppliers must provide information in compliance with WHMIS 2015 by June 2018. The transitional requirements for suppliers are listed in the new federal legislation in Gazette II (<http://canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2015/2015-02-11/pdf/g2-14903.pdf>). When the OHS Code is amended, it is likely that employers will be provided with some additional time before they must fully comply with WHMIS 2015.

Due to the supplier transition provisions contained in the federal legislation and until Part 29 of the OHS Code is amended, Alberta employers must proceed as follows:

1. If there are **no** products with WHMIS 2015 safety data sheets (SDSs) and labels in the workplace, the employer continues to comply with WHMIS 1988 requirements.
2. If the employer receives a product that has an SDS and label complying with WHMIS 2015, they must comply with the WHMIS 2015 requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Training under Section 397 of the OHS Code must include content consistent with WHMIS 2015 for SDSs and labels for workers who work with or near the product(s)

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- The employer is not required to ensure the SDS is within three years of its latest revision as this requirement has been removed in WHMIS 2015 for suppliers. Suppliers must update SDSs as soon as significant information becomes available. Therefore, each time an employer purchases a hazardous product, they must ensure they are provided with the most current version of the supplier SDS.
3. If the employer receives a product that complies with WHMIS 2015, they may apply a work site label, in accordance with Section 398 of the OHS Code that complies with WHMIS 1988 to the product container. In this case, they can continue to only comply with WHMIS 1988 in the workplace. However, in addition to complying with the WHMIS 1988 requirements, they also must ensure the SDS provided with the product contains all of the information listed in Schedule 1 of the former federal *Controlled Products Regulations*.

Where an employer has products that meet both WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015 in the workplace, the employer must comply with both systems concurrently, including training, unless they have chosen to follow option (3) for each product that complies with WHMIS 2015.

A generic worker training course is available for free online from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. For information on this and for other resources on WHMIS 2015, go to the National WHMIS webpage at <http://WHMIS.org>.

Contact us:

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Web Site



www.work.alberta.ca

Getting copies of *OHS Act*, Regulation & Code:

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Occupational Health and Safety

<http://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety/295.html>



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