

Hazard Communication Standard: Occupational Safety and Health Administration Proposed Revisions/Update



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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) announced on February 5th a prepublication proposed rule to update and revise its Hazard Communication Standard (“HCS”).

OSHA state that the purpose of the proposed rule is to modify the HCS to:

- Maintain conformity with the United Nations’ Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) (Revision 7)
- Align certain provisions with Canada and other United States agencies
- Address issues that have arisen since implementation of the 2012 HCS standard

The HCS is found at 29 C.F.R. 1910.1200. The OSHA HCS was originally promulgated in 1983.

The HCS requires that employers communicate with employees about hazardous chemicals to which they may be exposed at work. The information provided by the HCS is typically divided into five main areas:

- List of hazardous chemicals used within the facility
- Creation of a written Hazardous Communication Program
- Proper labelling of dangerous chemicals
- Provide material safety datasheets
- Provide comprehensive staff training

The HCS provides certain information about the identities and hazards of the chemicals by requiring:

- Chemical manufacturers and importers must evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import, and prepare labels and Material Safety Datasheets to convey the hazard information to their downstream customers.
- Employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces must provide labels and Material Safety Datasheets for exposed workers, and train them to handle the chemicals appropriately.

The Material Safety Datasheets provide information about the chemicals which include:

- Properties and risks
- Correct handling and storage practices
- What protective measures employees should use to remain safe when handling or interacting with chemicals

The proposed rule also includes incorporating in the regulations certain enforcement policies (i.e., current compliance directives). Further, revisions were undertaken in regards to mandates for the transportation of hazardous chemicals. Small containers labelling provision alternatives are provided. In addition, Material Safety Datasheet requirements are addressed.

A link to the 486-page proposed rule can be found [here](#).