

Hazard Communication & the Globally Harmonized System

OAR 437
Division 2/Z, 3/D,
and 4/Z

Hazard Communication & the Globally Harmonized System

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A Division of the
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Highlights of the current rule requirements and what's changing in 2013-2016

Following federal OSHA's lead, Oregon OSHA revised its Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) for general industry to align with the [Globally Harmonized System \(GHS\)](#) of classification and labeling of chemicals.

The key changes in the Hazard Communication Standard affect both chemical suppliers (manufacturers, importers, distributors) and employers whose employees may be exposed to hazardous chemicals. Although the standard has been adopted, there are multiple delayed effective dates.

Effective dates:

Effective completion Date	Requirement	Who
Dec. 1, 2013	Train employees on the new label elements and safety data sheet (SDS) format.	Employers
June 1, 2015	Compliance with all modified provisions of this final rule.	Chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, and employers
Dec. 1, 2015	Distributor must not ship containers labeled by the chemical manufacturer or importer unless it is a GHS label.	Chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, and employers
June 1, 2016	Update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication program as necessary and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards.	Employers

Hazard classification:

The classification of chemical hazards in the GHS is different from the performance-oriented approach allowed in the previous Hazard Communication Standard. The new HCS requires suppliers to use the GHS-specific criteria for each type of health and physical hazard. Detailed instructions for evaluation, classification, categorization of the hazards and use of label elements are provided in new Appendices A, B, C, D, and F to 1910.1200.

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Written hazard communication program:

There were no significant changes to the requirements for a written hazard communication program. However, the format for safety data sheets (previously known as material safety data sheets) and the elements required on product labels, which provide the main information about workplace chemical hazards covered in the written program, have changed substantially.

- **Safety Data Sheets:** Safety data sheets (SDS) will replace material safety data sheets (MSDS). Suppliers must prepare safety data sheets for their products that follow a standardized 16-section format in conveying information about a hazardous chemical's health effects and physical and chemical characteristics. More on the [SDS/MSDS comparison](#).
- **Labels:** Suppliers must develop new product labels that include signal words, pictograms, hazard statements, and precautionary statements for chemicals based on their hazard classification and category. Employers must ensure that employees understand the meaning of each of these elements on the new labels. More on [labels](#).

It remains the employer's responsibility to develop and implement a written hazard communication program, which includes a list of hazardous chemicals known to be present, container labels, safety data sheets, and employee information and training. Safety data sheets must be immediately available to employees. See Oregon OSHA's [sample written program](#).

Information and training: Employers must continue to provide employees with effective information and training on hazardous chemicals they use or are exposed to in the workplace at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new hazard is introduced. New requirements include training on the meaning of the new label elements, the new safety data sheet format, and any newly-identified physical or health hazards. Employers must also update their hazard communication programs and workplace labeling as new hazard information becomes available.

Oregon's Hazard Communication Standards:

- Hazard Communication, general industry – Division 2/Z, 1910.1200.
- Hazard Communication, construction – Division 3/D, 1926.59 (refers back to 1910.1200.)
- Hazard Communication, agriculture – Division 4/Z, 437-004-9800 will be revised in a separate rulemaking.

Other affected rules:

Oregon OSHA also modified parts of other general industry standards, including flammable liquids; spray finishing; hazardous waste operations and emergency response; process safety management; pipe labeling; and several substance-specific health standards, to ensure consistency with the modified Hazard Communication Standard requirements. [More information is available](#).

Useful Resources:

- [Federal OSHA's Hazard Communication page](#) (Includes links to training resources about SDSs, pictograms, and other label elements.)
- [Side-by-side changes in the federal rule](#)
- [Oregon OSHA's Hazard Communication topic page](#)