

# Foundation of Workplace Chemical Safety Programs

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## The Globally Harmonized System for Hazard Communication

### Background



In 2003, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). The GHS includes criteria for the classification of health, physical and environmental hazards, as well as specifying what information should be included on labels of hazardous chemicals as well as safety data sheets. The United States was an active participant in the development of the GHS, and is a member of the UN bodies established to maintain and coordinate implementation of the system. The official text of the GHS can be found on the [UN web page](#).

### OSHA GHS Proposal

OSHA published a proposed rulemaking on September 30, 2009 to align OSHA's Hazard Communication standard (HCS) with the GHS. [Also available as an 11 MB PDF, 271 pages] This is a significant step in the rulemaking process. OSHA has provided a 90-day comment period ending on December 29, 2009. Informal public hearings will follow. OSHA will publish a hearing notice in the Federal Register with details on dates and location(s).

To aid in the understanding of the HCS proposal OSHA is providing additional information:

- *Proposed HCS regulatory text* [63 KB [PDF\\*](#), 30 pages]
- *Proposed Appendix A: Health Hazard Criteria (Mandatory)* [347 KB [PDF\\*](#), 68 pages]
- *Proposed Appendix B: Physical Hazard Criteria (Mandatory)* [130 KB [PDF\\*](#), 28 pages]
- *Proposed Appendix C: Allocation of Label Elements (Mandatory)* [350 KB [PDF\\*](#), 75 pages]
- *Proposed Appendix D: Safety Data Sheets (Mandatory)* [53 KB [PDF\\*](#), 3 pages]
- *Proposed Appendix E (Existing Appendix D): Definition of Trade Secret (Mandatory)* [21 KB [PDF\\*](#), 2 pages]
- *Proposed Appendix F: Guidance for Hazard Classifications Regarding Carcinogenicity (Non-Mandatory)* [62 KB [PDF\\*](#), 4 pages]
- *Proposed HCS regulatory text (redline strikeout)* [261 KB [PDF\\*](#), 38 pages]
- *Side-by-side comparison of the current HCS to the Proposed Rule* [327 KB [PDF\\*](#), 45 pages]
- [Facts on Aligning the Hazard Communication Standard to the GHS](#)

### OSHA GHS Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

In May 2005, The Agency added to its regulatory agenda consideration of rulemaking to revise the HCS to align its requirements with the GHS. As the first step in that rulemaking process, OSHA published an

[advance notice of proposed rulemaking \(ANPR\)](#) on September 12, 2006. [Also available as a 3 MB [PDF](#), 11 pages.]

The ANPR explains the history of the development of the GHS, including OSHA's involvement in the process. It also indicates how alignment with the GHS would affect the requirements of the HCS, and asks a series of questions to allow the public an opportunity to provide input. The comment period closed on November 13, 2006. Comments submitted are available on OSHA's web page under the e-docket section. The Docket Number is H022K. This October 2006 Powerpoint [presentation](#) (162 KB [PPT](#), 51 slides) provides more information about the ANPR, the impact of the GHS on the HCS, and other implementation issues.

OSHA has also completed a [detailed comparison](#) of the provisions of the GHS to the requirements of the HCS. This document indicates the changes that would have to be made to be consistent with the GHS. [Also available as a 901 KB [PDF](#), 153 pages.]

### Other Federal Agency Activities



- [Globally Harmonized System \(GHS\) for Classification and Labeling of Chemicals](#). Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- [Global Harmonization of Hazard Classification and Labeling Systems](#). US Department of Transportation (DOT).
- [Policy of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals \(GHS\)](#). Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

### Implementation in Other Countries

- [The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals \(GHS\)](#). Health Canada.
- [REACH and GHS Overview](#). European Commission, European Union. Streamlines and improves the former legislative framework on chemicals of the European Union (EU) through Regulation, Evaluation, Authorization, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) which entered in force on June 1, 2007.
- [More Information on GHS](#). European Commission, European Union.
  - [GHS Legislation](#)
  - [Guidance - GHS](#)
- [GHS: Status of Implementation](#). UN Economic Commission. Tracks international implementation.
- [Workplace Hazardous Chemicals Public Comment](#). Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC).
  - *Draft National Standard for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals*. (2006, September), 889 KB [PDF](#), 84 pages.
  - [Proposed revisions to the workplace chemicals regulatory framework](#). Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC).

Other Resources

[Society for Chemical Hazard Communication](#)

These files are provided for downloading.