



Canada's *Hazardous Products Act* and Regulations To Implement Globally Standardized Rules

By [Marc McAree](#), Partner, Certified Environmental Law Specialist with the assistance of Giselle Davidian, Student-at-Law
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On February 11, 2015, the federal Hazardous Products Regulations (HPR) and the Hazardous Products Act (HPA) came into force. The HPR and HPA implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) in Canada. GHS is an international initiative to standardize rules for classifying and communicating about chemical hazards. Through the HPR and HPA, Canada modifies the Workers Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) to incorporate the GHS. The key roles and responsibilities for suppliers, employers and workers under the original 1988 WHMIS program will not change.

The amended HPA and new HPR compliance periods establish a three-phase transition approach to update WHMIS. By December 1, 2018, all suppliers and employers are expected to comply with HPR requirements. The updated 2015 WHMIS program will align Canada's hazard classification and communication requirements with those of its trading partners. This should enhance the competitiveness of Canadian suppliers.

Updated 2015 WHMIS Transition

To allow suppliers, employers and workers ample time to comply with the new system, transition to the updated 2015 WHMIS program will follow a three phase approach. The phased compliance periods will facilitate provinces and territories harmonizing their WHMIS legislation. By December 1, 2018, all manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers across Canada must comply with HPR requirements.

Changes to WHMIS

Below is a summary of major changes to the updated 2015 WHMIS program:

- ◆ **Classification Rules**—WHMIS continues to apply to both physical hazards and health hazards groups. Some new classes are added to the classification criteria. Additional hazard classes required under physical hazards include combustible dusts, simple asphyxiants, pyrophoric gases and physical hazards not otherwise classified. New hazard classes required under health hazards include biohazardous infectious materials and health hazards not otherwise classified. Each hazard class is assigned a category that describes the severity of the hazard.
- ◆ **Supplier Labels**—Supplier labels are standardized to include product identifiers, initial supplier identifiers, pictograms, signal words, hazard statements, precautionary statements and supplemental label information. The new WHMIS continues to require bilingual supplier labels.

- ◆ **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)**—The GHS-prescribed format for SDS includes 16 sections with specific information requirements. Sections include hazard identification, information on ingredients, first aid measures, accidental release measures, exposure controls, physical and chemical properties and toxicological information. HPR specifies the required SDS sections and content.

WHMIS Roles, Responsibilities and Duties

The responsibilities imposed by the original 1988 WHMIS program on suppliers, employers and workers continue to apply. Accordingly:

- ◆ Suppliers will continue to identify hazardous products, prepare labels and SDSs for products, and provide them to customers.
- ◆ Employers will continue to ensure that all hazardous products are properly labelled, updated SDSs are available for workers, and appropriate control measures are in place to protect the health and safety of workers. Employers must also provide workers with education and training about the use of hazardous products.
- ◆ Workers will continue to participate in WHMIS training programs, take steps to protect themselves and their co-workers, and identify and control hazards.

[Marc McAree](#) is a partner at *Willms & Shier Environmental Lawyers LLP* and a Certified Specialist in *Environmental Law*. You can reach Marc at 416-862-4820 or mmcaree@willmsshier.com.

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