



RISKCONTROL360<sup>o</sup>

## **G.H.S. - The Most Significant Change to OSHA Regulations in Years**

If you know what a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is and your business is one of the 3 million workplaces in the United States required to make them available to employees, this change to OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) will impact you. The HCS is now aligned with the **G**lobally **H**armonized **S**ystem of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). The purpose of the HCS is to ensure chemical safety in the workplace by providing understandable information about the identities and hazards of chemicals to workers.

OSHA has positioned the change by stating, *"The Hazard Communication Standard in 1983 gave workers the 'right to know,' but the new Globally Harmonized System gives workers the 'right to understand'."*

### **Major changes to the Hazard Communication Standard include the following:**

- **Hazard classification:** Provides specific criteria for classification of health and physical hazards, as well as classification of mixtures.
- **Labels:** Chemical manufacturers and importers will be required to provide a label that includes a harmonized signal word, pictogram, and hazard statement for each hazard class and category. Precautionary statements must also be provided.
- **Safety Data Sheets:** Will replace Material Safety Data Sheets and now have a specified 16-section format.
- **Information and training:** Employers are required to train workers by December 1, 2013 on the new labels elements and safety data sheets format to facilitate recognition and understanding.
- **Written policy:** The HCS has always required a written policy and employers will have to update the policy to include the changes.

### **Effective dates for phasing in the new requirements of the HCS are as follows:**

- **December 1, 2013:** Employers must train employees on the new label elements and Safety Data Sheet (SDS) format.
- **June 1, 2015:** Compliance with all modified provisions of the HCS, including container labeling, except those provisions provided below.
- **December 1, 2015:** Chemical distributors shall not ship containers labeled by the chemical manufacturer or importer unless it is a GHS label.
- **June 1, 2016:** Employer must update alternative workplace labeling and written hazard communication program as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards of chemicals.

OSHA decided that a change to the HCS was necessary because chemical information on labels and MSDSs was allowed to be conveyed by manufacturers and importers in whatever format they choose, within OSHA guidelines. OSHA believes that a more standardized approach to classifying the hazards and providing the information will be more effective. The GHS provides the structure.

Be sure to visit our website [www.riskcontrol360.com](http://www.riskcontrol360.com) for details on free upcoming webinars. For more information about GHS, modification to the HCS, and potential assistance with implementing these changes, please contact:

**Brad Hunt**  
(330) 301-3262  
[bhunt@riskcontrol360.com](mailto:bhunt@riskcontrol360.com)  
Director, RC360<sup>o</sup>

- OR -

**Shari May**  
(614) 827-0363  
[smay@riskcontrol360.com](mailto:smay@riskcontrol360.com)  
Manager of Marketing, RC360<sup>o</sup>