

At MSDSpro, we understand that making the transition to Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) can be overwhelming. Therefore, we will do our best as the industry leader in MSDS and chemical management to provide you with the appropriate tools and planning materials to make a successful and smooth transition.

Companies Affected by GHS:

The majority of changes and financial burden (cost) will impact manufacturers who provide Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for their chemical products. Companies who receive these GHS-compliant SDSs will experience some changes as well, but is limited in comparison to the process and costs associated with GHS-compliant SDS.

MSDS Format:

The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) will undergo extensive formatting and data changes after OSHA adopts GHS. Products sold in the United States will be re-classified for health and physical hazards based on GHS criteria. The title of the document will also likely be changed to Safety Data Sheet (SDS). Additionally, the flexibility of format will be removed. The 16-section document layout, as adopted by the ANSI Z400. 1-2004 standard, will be required. Each section is specific: Section 2 addresses Hazard identification, Section 3 Component Information, and so on. The consistent format will greatly assist employees quickly and easily finding the requested information on the SDS.

Labeling:

GHS will require the standardization for all product labels. This will result in a reprocessing of every label during transition. Standardized pictograms, signal words, hazard statements and precautionary statements have been specifically designed to enhance communication for all personnel handling chemicals in the workplace. This information would be displayed on the label in accordance with GHS requirements.

Training:

The greatest training challenge facing downstream employers is the education of employees on SDS and label changes due to the updated product classifications. Pictograms, signal words and hazard and precautionary statements will need to be addressed as well. From a process standpoint, training managers should plan to follow existing HAZCOM requirements, as the current training procedures are more detailed than the GHS training recommendations and will likely be retained.

Written Program:

Because OSHA has indicated it will retain the provisions of HAZCOM that are not affected by GHS, the written program is expected to be largely unchanged. It will, however, need to be modified to include any resulting changes to labeling and SDS communication, as well as related employee training.



MSDSpro:

Today, MSDSpro is currently planning for changes to proactively migrate our current database structure to meet GHS information tracking requirements. MSDSpro software development focus is on MSDS and labeling, addressing the needs of the United States and Canada in particular. Canada is currently ahead of the United States in its proposed adoption of GHS. By the time GHS is adopted in the U.S., the MSDSpro software will include additional fields related to GHS. Once the new legislation is passed, the adoption and transition to GHS will not happen overnight. Chemical manufacturers may have anywhere from 12-36 months to issue GHS-compliant SDSs for the United States and Canada.