



## **Hazard Communication Standard and the Globally Harmonized System (GHS)** **What Should We Know?**

On March 20, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, joined by Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels, hosted a press teleconference to announce a final rule updating OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard.

Assistant Secretary Michaels explained that OSHA's revised Hazard Communication standard (HCS), which will be fully implemented in 2016, benefits workers by reducing confusion in the workplace, facilitating safety training, and improving understandings of hazards, especially for low-wage and limited-literacy workers. The harmonized standard will classify chemicals according to their health and physical hazards, and establish consistent labels and safety data sheets for all chemicals made in the United States or imported from abroad.

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

- **Hazard classification:** Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to determine the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import. Hazard classification under the new, updated standard provides specific criteria to address health and physical hazards as well as classification of chemical mixtures.
- **Labels:** Chemical manufacturers and importers must provide a label that includes a signal word, pictogram, hazard statement, and precautionary statement for each hazard class and category. Below is a link to the nine pictograms.  
[http://www.osha.gov/Publications/HazComm\\_QuickCard\\_Pictogram.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/HazComm_QuickCard_Pictogram.html)
- **Safety Data Sheets:** The new format requires 16 specific sections, ensuring consistency in presentation of important protection information.
- **Information and training:** To facilitate understanding of the new system, the new standard requires that workers be trained by December 1, 2013 on the new label elements and safety data sheet format, in addition to the current training requirements.

**Effective Dates**

<b>Effective Completion Date</b>	<b>Requirement(s)</b>	<b>Who</b>
December 1, 2013	Train employees on the new label elements and SDS format.	Employers
June 1, 2015* December 1, 2015	Comply with all modified provisions of this final rule, except:  Distributors may ship products labeled by manufacturers under the old system until December 1, 2015.	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
Transition Period	Comply with either 29 CFR 1910.1200 (this final standard), or the current standard, or both.	All chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers

\* This date coincides with the European Union implementation date for classification of mixtures.

Sources:

“Hazard Communication Standard Final Rule”

<http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/HCSFactsheet.html>