



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

# Weekly Safety Meeting

## Globally Harmonized System (GHS)

For many years now, employees could gather limited information about the hazardous chemicals they work with by looking at container labels and reading Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs). However, there was not a set format to govern how the companies that produced or distributed those chemicals categorized the hazards of their products, or how the labels and MSDSs had to appear. The end result was a confusing mish-mash of information that often failed to help workers quickly discern the hazards of the products they were using.

To address this problem, OSHA recently revised their Hazard Communication Standard to align with the international “Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals,” commonly referred to as “GHS.” As a result, manufacturers and distributors of hazardous chemicals and products must begin to standardize how they categorize the hazards of their products, as well as the information and format of their container labels and Safety Data Sheets.

### Overview of changes:

- “Material Safety Data Sheets” (MSDSs) are replaced by “Safety Data Sheets” (SDSs).
- The new SDSs are divided into 16 sections, with information about the product’s chemical hazards appearing in a set order that is always the same for every sheet.
- Container labels should display mandatory information, including a product identifier that is exactly the same as that appearing on the corresponding Safety Data Sheet.
- Container labels will also have standardized “signal words,” “hazard statements,” and “precautionary statements” to help ensure you are alerted to applicable dangers and necessary safeguards you should follow when working with that product.
- All container labels should display one or more of eight specific “pictograms,” which are basically icons that appears in small red boxes that will help you to quickly identify the specific hazard or hazards associated with the product you are using.

### Signal words:

Based on the GHS criteria, only two signal words, ‘Danger’ and ‘Warning,’ remain. GHS drops ‘Caution.’ The signal word indicates the relative degree of severity of a hazard.

- ‘Danger,’ for the more severe hazards.
- ‘Warning,’ for the less severe hazards.

### **Hazard statements:**

These are standard phrases assigned to a hazard class and category that describe the nature of the hazard. There is a single harmonized hazard statement for each level of hazard within each hazard class.

### **Precautionary statements:**

Standardized precautionary statements describe recommended measures to minimize or prevent adverse effects resulting from exposure, improper handling, or incorrect storage methods of a hazardous chemical.

- Example: "Wear face protection. First aid is included in precautionary information."

### **Pictograms**

These convey health, physical, and environmental hazard information, assigned to a GHS hazard class and category. The GHS designates eight pictograms to identify a hazard category. Manufacturers and producers are already producing updated labels. Businesses will need to contact the manufacturers and producers for updated labeling.

### **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)**

Along with labeling, a safety data sheet must accompany all the material identified in the inventory. Under the revised standard, SDSs replace material safety data sheets. SDSs provide a standardized order of information whereas MSDSs provide a detailed reference source on a hazardous material, but do not specify a format or order of information.

### **The new SDSs contain 16 headings:**

1. Identification
2. Hazard identification
3. Composition/information on ingredients
4. First aid measures
5. Firefighting measures
6. Accidental release measures
7. Handling and storage
8. Exposure controls/personal protection
9. Physical and chemical properties
10. Stability and reactivity
11. Toxicological information
12. Ecological information
13. Disposal considerations
14. Transport information
15. Regulatory information
16. Other information

**Of the 16 headings, OSHA will regulate 12. It will not regulate:**

- Ecological information;
- Disposal considerations;
- Transport information; and
- Regulatory information.

HazCom programs need to be updated, and written to reflect the changes in the work environment brought about by the new regulations. Written programs should include how the facility implemented the standard, contain a list of all chemicals, address non-routine tasks, and discuss contractors' responsibilities.

**Your Right to Know...It's ALL about SAFETY!!!**

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests

