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Just The Facts About GHS

The Globally Harmonized System (GHS) is a hot topic of discussion internationally. While GHS has historically focused on the international community, the European Union and Japan, the GHS trend is moving west and will definitely be in the spotlight in the U.S. in 2012. GHS has already had and will continue to have profound effects on chemical data management initiatives, both for companies that must author and publish material safety data sheets (MSDS) for their chemical products, as well as those companies that must manage (M)SDS and related chemical data for onsite chemical inventories.

With all of the information and change swirling about GHS, we're presenting "just the facts" in this easy-to-digest Infographic about what you need to know about GHS. Enjoy and share with your colleagues in and out of the EHS profession!



Beginning in 2012, the United States and several additional countries around the globe will transition to GHS. Many other regions such as the EU and Japan have already adopted it. What is GHS, and why should you care? To put it simply, **GHS is a standardized system of classifying and labeling hazardous chemicals.** This ground breaking effort will have major implications on the safety, welfare, and environment for the entire world working with chemicals.

JUST THE FACTS ABOUT GHS

What is GHS?

GHS Globally Harmonized

GHS System of Classification and Labeling Chemicals

is a standard system for labeling and classifying the hazards in chemicals and for conveying that information in health/data sheets for common global use. GHS was developed by international hazard communication experts.



Why do we need GHS?

Without GHS, every country has a different system for communicating chemical-hazard information, with little or no consistency among the systems. GHS is needed to:



Make all systems consistent for workers handling hazardous chemicals



Reduce costs to governments and companies complying with different systems



Enable better communication of chemical information



Protect workers



Increase international trade

What are the end goals of GHS?

The basic goal of GHS is to standardize the classification rules for hazards, as well as safety data sheets (SDS) and chemical labels.



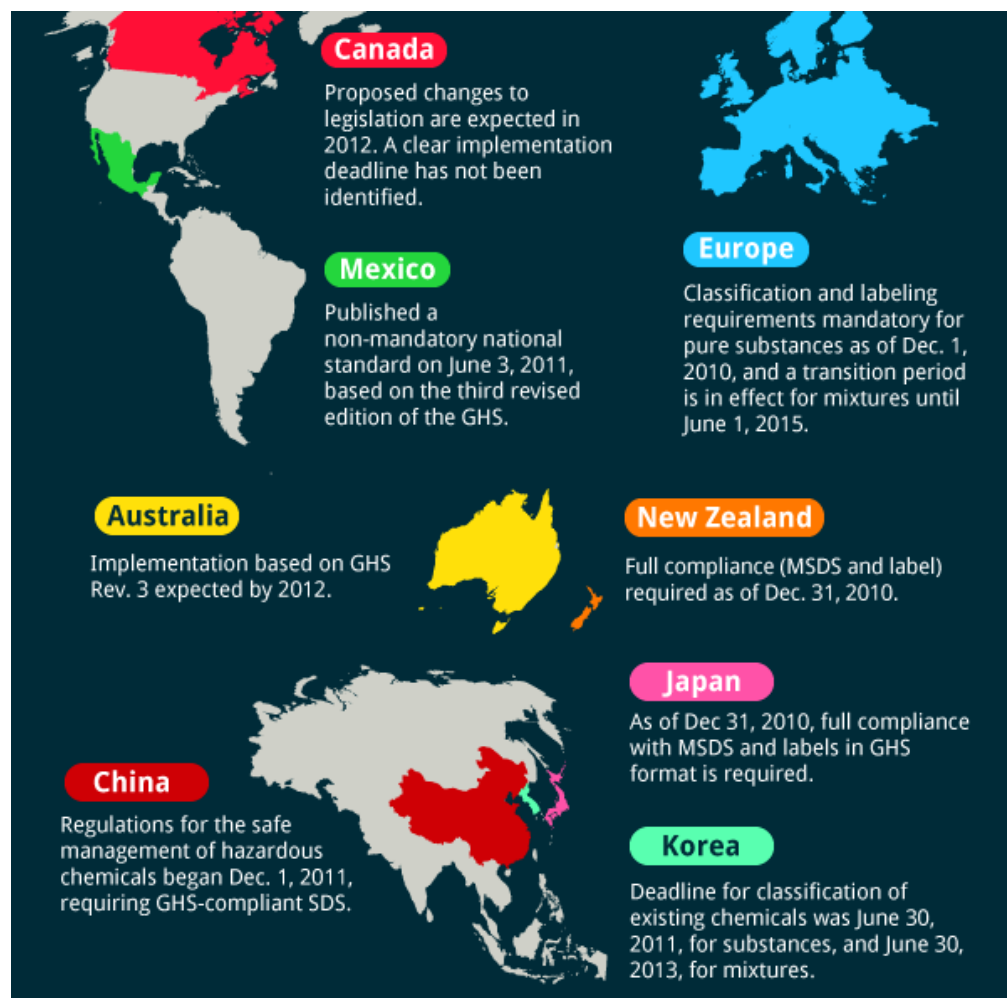
The aim is to create a system that can be utilized as needed by countries using a building-block approach, or a la carte style.



GLOBAL ADOPTION

Adoption of GHS began back in 1992 when UNICED required a standard practice for labeling chemicals. After 20 years of research, committee meetings, and public hearings, a three-year implementation is scheduled to begin in the US in 2012.

GHS IMPLEMENTATION AROUND THE GLOBE



ADOPTION IN THE U.S.

The United States is busily preparing to start transition to GHS in

2012



Number of Safety Documents Affected



1,000,000 documents for about **1,000,000** chemicals

Number of Companies Affected



5 million+ workplaces

Number of People Affected

40 million+ workers



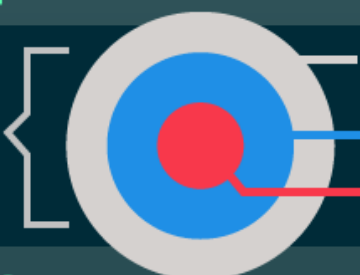
Number of Years to Transition

3 years from final ruling year - However, training must be completed in 2 yrs

2013
2014

Cost of Adoption

\$97M
per year
(total)



\$44M - Implementation and Oversight
 \$42M - Training
 \$11M - SDS Preparation

Safety Outcomes



Prevention of 43 fatalities and 585 injuries and illnesses per year.



Money saved from these reductions = **\$266 million per year**

Cost Savings

Cost reductions + productivity improvements = **\$585 million per year**



OSHA estimates a net annual savings of **\$754 million per year** from proposed revisions.

What does all this mean? It means that implementing this program only costs **12.8% of the savings per year.**



WHAT'S CHANGING? 5 Areas Affected by Change

1 The new SDS will contain the following 16 sections:



Identification



Hazard(s) identification



Composition/ information on ingredients



First-aid measures



Fire-fighting measures



Accidental release measures



Handling and storage



Exposure controls/ personal protection



Physical and chemical properties



Stability and reactivity



Toxicological information



Ecological information



Disposal considerations



Transport information



Regulatory information



Other information

2 Classifications

Label ratings are inverted

OLD

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

In current NFPA or HMIS rating systems, "4" is the worst rating, and "1" is the best.

NEW

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

However, in GHS nomenclature, "category 1" is the worst.



This can cause confusion during training, which may draw the process out.

3 Labels

There are two signal words in the GHS system: **danger** and **warning**. These signal words are used to communicate the level of hazard on both the label and the SDS.



P&H phrases

Hazard

Precautionary Statements

Name

MSDS **SDS**

MSDS is now SDS (Safety Data Sheet)

Classifications

CATEGORY II
CATEGORY III Acute Toxicity
 Skin Corrosion **RESPIRATORY**
CATEGORY IV
 CATEGORY I

Standardized GHS pictograms developed
 -shown with example hazard-



Flammable



Explosive



Oxidizer



Corrosive



Gas under pressure



Acute toxicity



Irritant



Carcinogen



Environmental toxicity

4 Communication/ Distribution



5 Training



HOW CAN COMPANIES PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL GHS TRANSITION?

- 1 Get prepared and be on the lookout for new GHS information.
- 2 Check implementation dates in your country, plus any you do business with.
- 3 Create a transition plan for your company.
- 4 Perform a chemical inventory to validate the chemicals actually present.
- 5 Put together a plan to acquire, update, and manage the new incoming SDS documents.
- 6 Update workplace labels according to new regulations.
- 7 Schedule employee training on new GHS approaches.

NEED MORE INFO?



NEED MORE INFO?

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Sources:

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<http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/ghs.html>
<http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/international/ghs/benefitsof-ghs.pdf>
<http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/international/ghs/pictograms.htm>
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Want to learn more? Download our [GHS Transition Guide](#) or view our [GHS Webinar Series](#).