

Editor's Note: Safety Group Program Monthly Newsletter Article – April 2015
Contact: Mindy Carrothers (303.361.4790, mindy.carrothers@pinnacol.com)

Upcoming Hazard Communication Standard Deadlines

OSHA estimates that more than 43 million workers are regularly exposed to hazardous chemicals in over 5 million workplaces in the United States. As you can imagine, this poses a significant safety risk for employees and companies alike. In a global economy where chemicals are manufactured, shipped and used by workers around the world, consistency in communicating those hazards is essential to safety.

To address this, OSHA revised the [Hazard Communication Standard](#) (HCS) to align U.S. standards with those set forth by the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). The revised HCS became effective in 2012, but a transition timetable was established to reduce the impact on employers. **There are two HCS deadlines coming up this year.**

Deadlines and other details for the transition include:

- **Dec. 1, 2013** – To facilitate understanding of the new system, employees must be trained on the new label elements and SDS format, in addition to the current HCS training requirements.
- **June 1, 2015** – Chemical manufacturers and importers must review hazard information for all chemicals produced and imported, classify chemicals according to the new classification criteria and update labels and SDSs.
- **Dec. 1, 2015** – Distributors must ensure that products are shipped with labels meeting GHS labeling requirements.
- **June 1, 2016** – Employers must update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication programs and provide any additional training for newly identified physical or health hazards.

OSHA's HCS updates include revisions to three main components of the HCS:

- **Hazard Classification:** Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to determine the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import. The new, updated standard provides specific criteria to address health and physical hazards as well as classification of chemical mixtures.
- **Labels:** Those who produce and import chemicals must provide a label that includes a signal word, pictogram, hazard statement and precautionary statement for each hazard class and category. The label must also include the product name or identifier and the manufacturer's or supplier's contact information.

- **Safety Data Sheets** (SDSs): Formerly called Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), the new format requires 16 specific sections, ensuring consistency in the presentation of important protection information.

Have questions? More HazCom information and web-based resources, including a [sample hazard communication program](#), can be found on Pinnacol.com, or call the Safety On Call hotline at 303.361.4700 to speak with a safety consultant.

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