

Safety Facts: WHMIS*



When dealing with hazardous products in Canada (in-use, handling, storage) you need a WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) program. **WHMIS** is aligned with the GHS – the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. This is a global program developed by the United Nations.

Adopting a uniform classification of hazardous products reduces confusion when handling products manufactured outside of Canada.

Why is it important?

Chemicals are often present at worksites. Each chemical has unique properties that require specific use, storage, and handling. Each chemical has unique health and physical hazards.

WHMIS helps ensure the health and safety of workers who work with these hazardous products.



Four key elements of WHMIS

Product classification. Products can be classified into two main hazard groups: physical and chemical. These groups are further divided into hazard classes based on the product.

Labels are placed on hazardous products so the user can correctly identify and take precautions, as needed.

Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) are 16-section documents required for each type of hazardous product. They include manufacturer, hazards, chemical information, spill clean-up procedures, etc.

Worker education and training is an important part of the WHMIS program. Workers are trained on relevant hazards, and the precautions they should be taking when working with the product.

Associated risks

Working with hazardous products can pose a health hazard. Health effects include skin and eye irritation, sensitization, cancer, and damage to internal organ. Hazardous products can be flammable, combustible, or explosive. WHMIS plays a key role in ensuring the health and safety of workers.

Preventative next steps

- Check your chemical inventory for hazardous products. Review your WHMIS program and address any gaps
- Are all chemical containers/bottles labelled?
- Are all Safety Data Sheets available for all chemical stored on site?
- Do workers know where to find the Safety Data Sheets?
- Are all workers who work with hazardous products trained in WHMIS 2015
- Are the hazards of working with specific chemicals understood?
- Are relevant safe work procedures available, when working with specific chemicals?
- Always refer to the Safety Data Sheet for specific information about the hazardous product. If in doubt, contact the manufacturer
- Rule of thumb: If in doubt throw it out



For additional resources visit:

Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC: safetyalliancebc.ca

WHMIS Toolbox Talk

Name of Facilitator: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Safety Specific Training Requirements: Identified Hazards/concerns

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Employee feedback/questions/recommendations

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Workers who attended

Name	Initial	Name	Initial
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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Key Talking Points
