

WHMIS 2015: An overview

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) provides you with health and safety information about hazardous products in your workplace.

Exposure to some types of hazardous products can result in health problems such as cancer, lung damage, or irritation of the eyes. Other types of hazardous products can cause fires, explosions, or other accidents when improperly stored or handled.

Under WHMIS, you have the right to receive information about each hazardous product you use, handle, or store (for example, its identity, its hazards, and the safety precautions you need to take). You can use this information to help make sure you go home alive and well at the end of every workday.

The overall purpose of WHMIS is to help ensure a safer, healthier workplace.

WHMIS first came into effect in 1988 across Canada. It was updated in early 2015 to reflect a new set of rules called the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

GHS has not replaced WHMIS. Instead, GHS introduces some important changes to WHMIS, including new rules for:

- Classifying and labelling hazardous products
- Safety data sheets or SDSs (previously known as material safety data sheets or MSDSs)

For the sake of clarity, the original WHMIS is now called WHMIS 1988. The updated version is called WHMIS 2015.

The four key elements of WHMIS 2015 include classification, labels, SDSs, and worker education and training.



Key changes from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015 include the following:

- The term “hazardous product” replaces “controlled product.”
- Hazard classification criteria are more complete. This improves the ability to show the severity of hazards.
- New hazard classes are included (for example, “Aspiration hazard”).
- The language has been standardized (made more consistent).
- Supplier labels have a few new requirements (for example, the use of specific signal words, hazard statements, pictograms, and precautionary statements).
- SDSs replace MSDSs. SDSs follow a 16-section format, and the information in those sections has been standardized.

A three-year transition period is in place. By June 1, 2018, all suppliers are expected to comply with WHMIS 2015. By December 1, 2018, all employers are expected to comply with WHMIS 2015.

Record of meeting

Project				
Address		City	Province	Postal code
Employer		Supervisor		
Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	Time		Shift	
Number in crew		Number attending		

Other safety issues or suggestions made by crew members

Record of those attending

Name (please print)	Signature	Company
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		

Manager's remarks	
Manager's signature	Supervisor's signature