

Transition from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015:

OHS information for workers and employers

KEY INFORMATION

- **Alberta OHS code Part 29 will change to match the federal legislation**
- **Manufacturers and importers must comply with WHMIS 2015 by June 1, 2018**
- **During the transition period, suppliers of "hazardous products" will be allowed to comply with the old system (WHMIS 1988) or the new (WHMIS 2015)**

WHMIS is changing; what do I need to know during the transition period?

The federal Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) legislation was amended February 11, 2015, to align with the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for classifying and labelling chemicals. Alberta will amend the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code, Part 29 to be consistent with the federal legislation. In the interim, this bulletin is intended to provide Alberta employers and workers with guidance on complying with WHMIS.

During the transition period, suppliers of "hazardous products" will be allowed to comply with the old system (WHMIS 1988) or the new (WHMIS 2015). Manufacturers and importers must provide information in compliance with WHMIS 2015 by June 1, 2018; distributors have until September 1, 2018. The transitional requirements for suppliers are listed in the new federal legislation in Gazette II (<http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2015/2015-02-11/pdf/g2-14903.pdf>). When the OHS Code is amended, it is likely that employers will be provided with some additional time before they must fully comply with WHMIS 2015.

Employers are required to follow one of three transition options

Due to the supplier transition provisions contained in the federal legislation and until Part 29 of the OHS Code is amended, Alberta employers must proceed as follows:

1. If there are **no** products with WHMIS 2015 safety data sheets (SDSs) and labels in the workplace, the employer continues to comply with WHMIS 1988 requirements.

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2. If the employer receives a product that has an SDS and label complying with WHMIS 2015, they must comply with the WHMIS 2015 requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Training under Section 397 of the OHS Code must include content consistent with WHMIS 2015 for SDSs and labels for workers who work with or near the product(s)
 - The employer is not required to ensure the SDS is within three years of its latest revision as this requirement has been removed in WHMIS 2015 for suppliers. Suppliers must update SDSs as soon as significant information becomes available. Therefore, each time an employer purchases a hazardous product, they must ensure they are provided with the most current version of the supplier SDS.

3. If the employer receives a product that complies with WHMIS 2015, they may apply a work site label, that complies with WHMIS 1988 to the product container. In this case, they can continue to only comply with WHMIS 1988 in the workplace. However, in addition to complying with the WHMIS 1988 requirements, they also must ensure the SDS provided with the product contains all of the information required based on WHMIS 1988.

Where an employer has products that meet both WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015 in the workplace, the employer must comply with both systems concurrently, including training, unless they have chosen to follow option (3) for each product that complies with WHMIS 2015.

Employee training WHMIS 2015

A generic worker awareness training course is available for free online from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. With the implementation of WHMIS 2015 a site specific training course will be required. You can find additional information on the free awareness training course and the site specific WHMIS requirements at the National WHMIS web page at <http://WHMIS.org>.

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Contact Us

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Throughout Alberta

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Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

Website

work.alberta.ca/ohs

For More Information:

- WHMIS website
<http://WHMIS.org>
- WHMIS information for employers
http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-PUB_ch008.pdf
- OHS Code Explanation Guide
http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-LEG_ohsc_p29.pdf

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work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation

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