

## **OSHA's Newly Revised Hazard Communication Standard: Key Changes and Compliance Dates**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has announced significant updates to its Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) (1910.1200), aligning it with the seventh revision of the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). This final rule will go into effect on July 19, as announced by OSHA on May 20.

### **Background**

OSHA's previous update to the HCS in 2012 was the first to align with the GHS, incorporating the third revision at that time. The current update reflects advancements and improvements from subsequent GHS revisions, ensuring that the HCS remains current and effective in communicating chemical hazards.

### **Key Changes**

#### **1. Revised Hazard Classification Criteria:**

The updated standard includes revised criteria for the classification of certain health and physical hazards, making the process clearer and more accurate. This ensures that labels and safety data sheets provide comprehensive hazard information.

#### **2. Updated Labeling Provisions:**

New provisions for updating labels have been introduced, along with specific requirements for labeling small containers. This makes labels more comprehensive and readable, even on smaller packaging.

#### **3. Trade Secrets and Safety Data Sheets:**

The revision includes new provisions related to trade secrets and technical amendments regarding the contents of safety data sheets. This change ensures that trade secrets do not hinder workers and first responders from accessing critical hazard information.

#### **4. Updated Definitions:**

The standard now includes revised definitions of key terms to enhance clarity and understanding across various provisions.

According to an OSHA press release, these updates aim to improve worker safety by providing clearer hazard classification processes, better informing users about the safe handling of hazardous materials, and ensuring that critical hazard information is accessible.

### **Compliance Dates**

OSHA has established specific compliance timelines for chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, and employers:

- Chemical Manufacturers, Importers, and Distributors:
  - Jan. 19, 2026, to July 19, 2027, depending if they are evaluating substances or mixtures.

- Employers (must update their Hazcom programs, labeling and employee training):
  - July 20, 2026 or Jan. 19, 2028 (depending upon substances or mixtures)

These revisions are designed to enhance the effectiveness of hazard communication in the workplace. Employers will need to take proactive steps to comply with the new requirements, including updating hazard communication programs, revising labels and safety data sheets, and providing thorough training to employees.

For employees, the updated standard promises clearer and more comprehensive hazard information, improving their ability to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous chemicals safely. Enhanced access to critical hazard information will also benefit first responders in emergency situations.

### **Conclusion**

OSHA's revised Hazard Communication Standard marks a significant improvement in chemical safety communication, aligning with the latest GHS revisions. By adhering to the updated requirements, employers and employees can work together to ensure a safer workplace.

For more detailed information on the revised Hazard Communication Standard and compliance resources, visit OSHA's official website or contact your local OSHA office.