



WHMIS is a comprehensive hazard identification system for workplace chemicals. In preparation for impending changes to WHMIS legislation in Canada, the following FAQ document has been developed to aid in understanding the expected changes. For additional information, please contact the Office of Risk Management at safety@uOttawa.ca.

What is WHMIS 2015?

WHMIS 2015 is the name that Health Canada is using to refer to updated WHMIS legislation. Rather than assigning a date to the training name, uOttawa is currently exploring various names for the internal WHMIS requirements and training. The terms “WHMIS 2015” and “new WHMIS” are used interchangeably in this document to refer to the updated WHMIS provisions.

How do the new WHMIS requirements improve workplace health and safety?

The new WHMIS will provide several benefits, including:

- New criteria for classifying hazardous products, indicating the severity of hazards
- The address of some hazardous properties of products that are not addressed in WHMIS 1988
- Standardized language on labels and Safety Data Sheets, meaning that information can be interpreted properly and in a consistent manner, regardless of the supplier, with emergency information appearing first
- New pictograms, which are more descriptive and easily understood
- Facilitation and harmonization of international trade in hazardous products, with more than 70 countries having adopted the new hazard identification system

When do the new WHMIS requirements take effect?

The transition from the current WHMIS to the new WHMIS consists of three phases:

- **Phase 1** began on February 11, 2015 and ends on May 31, 2017. During Phase 1:
 - Suppliers who are chemical manufacturers or importers can sell hazardous products with either the old WHMIS labels and safety data sheets or the new ones.
 - Employers can receive and use hazardous products with either the old WHMIS labels and Safety Data Sheets or the new ones.

As of June 1, 2017, chemical manufacturers and importers must sell hazardous products with labels and Safety Data Sheets that comply with the new WHMIS requirements.

- **Phase 2** begins on June 1, 2017 and ends on May 31, 2018. During Phase 2:
 - Suppliers who are chemical distributors can continue to sell hazardous products with either the old WHMIS labels and Safety Data Sheets or the new ones.
 - Employers can receive and use hazardous products with either the old WHMIS labels and Safety Data Sheets or the new ones.

As of June 1, 2018, distributors must sell hazardous products that comply with WHMIS 2015 requirements only.

- **Phase 3** begins on June 1, 2018 and ends on November 30, 2018. During Phase 3:
 - Employers should only be receiving hazardous products with WHMIS 2015 labels and Safety Data Sheets.
 - Employers will have these final six months to bring existing inventories into compliance with WHMIS 2015.

By December 1, 2018, the transition to WHMIS 2015 must be complete for all parties. There should be no hazardous products in the workplace with old WHMIS labels and Safety Data Sheets.

What are the principle differences between WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015?

1. Controlled products are now called hazardous products.
2. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are now called Safety Data Sheets (SDS).



3. There are new rules for classifying hazardous products, including two main hazard classes—[physical hazards and health hazards](#)—with new pictograms.
4. New container label requirements, including pictograms that correspond to the updated hazard classes.
5. The SDS must now have 16 sections with more information, rather than nine sections.

What are my responsibilities during the transition phases?

The key responsibilities of suppliers, employers and workers found in the current WHMIS legislation remain the same under WHMIS 2015. Therefore,

Workers must

- Participate in required training (including updated WHMIS training)
- Identify and assist in controlling hazards in the workplace
- Protect themselves and others in the workplace

uOttawa must

- Educate and train workers on the safe use of hazardous products
- Ensure hazardous products are properly labelled
- Prepare workplace labels and SDS
- Provide access to up-to-date SDS
- Demonstrate due diligence in the protection of workers

Am I required to take additional training during the transition phases?

WHMIS training remains a requirement and there continue to be two unique uOttawa WHMIS workshops available:

- [WHMIS for Office Workers](#)
- [WHMIS for Laboratory Workers](#)

Both existing WHMIS workshops include a module dedicated to briefly orienting participants to the new WHMIS requirements.

An interim workshop, titled [Preparing for Change: the Globally Harmonized System \(GHS\)](#), was developed for persons who have already completed WHMIS training. If you completed WHMIS training:

- **BEFORE September 1, 2014**, it is recommended you take this short workshop.
- **AFTER September 1, 2014**, you have already completed this short workshop.

Where can I find my WHMIS certificate?

Training certificates for workshops completed after 2012 are available in your [CODL learning profile](#). Certificates for workshops completed prior to 2012 are not centrally managed. Note: WHMIS and [Worker Health and Safety Awareness](#) are two distinct and unique workshops—they are **not** the same.

Will I need to take further WHMIS training once all new requirements have come into effect?

Yes, all workers (including students, where applicable) will be required to retake WHMIS training that aligns with the new WHMIS legislation and training requirements. Training will be available primarily online and managed using the CODL learning platform.

When will new WHMIS training be available?

Training on the new WHMIS requirements is expected to be available in late 2017 to early 2018, with a compliance deadline of December 1, 2018.

Where can I find more information about the new WHMIS requirements?

Contact the Office of Risk Management at safety@uOttawa.ca. You can also consult any of the following online resources:

- [Ontario Ministry of Labour](#)



- [Health Canada](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)