

## Safety Alert: GHS

“What the heck is GHS?” It is a new system we all need to learn and teach our employees. **G H S** stands for **Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals**.

This system replaces the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets System) that we have used for years. It is an attempt by the UN (United Nations) to bring all developed countries into one system of labelling chemicals and educating the end use of the safe use and handling of chemicals.

As with all things Government, there are requirements and time tables to get them completed. This is not different, here are the time tables.

- December 1, 2013 – Train all employees on the new label elements of the SDS (Safety Data Sheets) format.
- June 1, 2015 – Comply with all modified provisions of this final rule except.
- December 1, 2015 – Distributors may ship products labeled by manufacturers under the old System until December 1, 2015.
- June 1, 2016 – Update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication program as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards.
- Transition Period – Comply with current Hazard Communications Program or the new one or both.

It appears that this new system will have little effect on the logging industry. The main change will be that after December 1, 2015 labels on chemical containers will be under the new format and there will be no more MSDS's. The important steps for you to take are:

1. Create a “change” plan to help you transition your current Hazard Communication Standard to comply with the new GHS.
2. Complete a new inventory of all chemicals your company is using.
3. Acquire new Safety Data Sheets that comply with new GHS regulations.
4. Update all labels to comply with the new regulations. New labels will have a signal word, pictogram and hazard statement.
5. Train all employees in the new Safety Data Sheets by December 1, 2013.

The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires chemical manufacturers, distributors and importers to provide Safety Data Sheets (SDS's) (formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheets or MSDS's) to communicate the hazards of hazardous chemical products. As of June 1, 2015, the HCS will require new SDS's to be in a uniform format, and include the section numbers, the headings and associated information under the headings below.

Section 1 – Identification includes product identifier; manufacturer or distributor name, address, phone number; emergency phone number; recommended use; restrictions on use.

Section 2 – Hazards(s) identification includes all hazards regarding the chemical; required label elements.

Section 3 – Composition / information on ingredients includes information on chemical ingredients; trade secret claims.

Section 4 – First-aid measures includes important symptoms / effects, acute, delayed; required treatment.

Section 5 – Fire-fighting measures lists suitable extinguishing techniques, equipment; chemical hazards from fire.

Section 6 – Accidental release measures lists emergency procedures; protective equipment; proper methods of containment and cleanup.

Section 7 – Handling and storage lists precautions for safe handling and storage, including incompatibilities.

Section 8 – Exposure control / personal protection lists OSHA's Permissible Exposure Limits (PEL's), Threshold Limit Values (TLV's), appropriate engineering controls; personal protective equipment (PPE).

Section 9 – Physical and chemical properties lists the chemical's characteristics.

Section 10 – Stability and reactivity lists chemical stability and possibility of hazardous reactions.

Section 11 – Toxicological information includes routes of exposure; related symptoms, acute and chronic effects; numerical measures to toxicity.

Section 12, 13, 14 & 15 are regulated by other agencies so they will contain general information.

Section 16 – Other information, includes the date of preparation or last revision.

Take time **now** to review this information with your employees and document the training.

*Information provided by Don Milani, Safety Director, Associated California Loggers*

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