

## Communication- Feb 2015

Amendments to the federal *Hazardous Products Act* and *Hazardous Products Regulations* requirements for Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems (WHMIS) will come into effect February 11, 2015. The amendments, referred to as WHMIS 2015, reflect the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

To ensure consistency of WHMIS across Canada, provincial and territorial jurisdictions responsible for occupational health and safety legislation have agreed to implement the necessary changes to their respective legislation as soon as practical. Where provincial or territorial jurisdictions are unable to bring the required legislative amendments into force on February 11, 2015, the transition to WHMIS 2015 will be implemented through temporary measures until the necessary amendments are put in place.

Transition will take effect in three phases:

- Phase One – Suppliers and employers will be able to comply with either the 1988 or the 2015 requirements (February 2015 to June 2017)
- Phase Two and Three – Labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) from WHMIS 1988 are gradually phased out, starting at the top of the supply chain (manufacturers and importers), working through to distributors and eventual full compliance with WHMIS 2015 at the workplace level (June 2017 to December 2018).

This transitional approach is guided by five principles and any temporary measures necessary in provincial or territorial jurisdictions will be applied to ensure worker health and safety. The five principles are:

- Primacy of occupational health and safety – Protecting workers from the adverse effects from exposure to hazardous materials.
- Collaboration – The federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions and Health Canada work collaboratively during the transition period.
- Consistency – Jurisdictions will make every effort to ensure consistency across Canada, both in the wording of amended legislation and its implementation during the transition period.
- Clarity – Health Canada will provide jurisdictions with clear and timely information on the new requirements and WHMIS jurisdictions will clearly communicate the common transition approach to stakeholders.
- Flexibility – A transitional approach will allow suppliers and employers a broader timeframe to adjust and comply with the WHMIS 2015 requirements.

## **In Prince Edward Island**

Prince Edward Island has begun the process to amend the required Occupational Health & Safety legislation to reflect the WHMIS 2015 requirements. Additional amendments will also be included to address the legislative style and language that is consistent with our existing legislation, as well as to provide consideration for new technologies now available for hazard communication. The amendments will also include provisions for the transition period from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015. However, the process will not be complete by February, 2015 and workplaces may receive products with labels and SDSs that are produced according to the new WHMIS 2015 provisions.

Workers will be permitted to use these products under the condition they are trained on the new changes for the GHS. This training is presently available for Free online at the Canadian Center for Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) at the following link:

[http://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/whmis\\_workers/](http://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/whmis_workers/)

Workers still require training on the WHMIS 1988 requirements provided they have WHMIS 1988 compliant products in their workplace.

Information to help with the transition from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015 is available for suppliers, distributors, employers and workers through WHMIS.org and WCB.PE.CA or by calling the OH&S Division at 902-368-5697. Additional information and resources will be added throughout the transition period.