

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS):

In order to ensure chemical safety in the workplace, information about the identities and hazards of the chemicals must be available and understandable to workers. OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires the development and dissemination of such information:

- Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import, and prepare labels and safety data sheets to convey the hazard information to their downstream customers;
- All employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplaces must have labels and safety data sheets for their exposed workers, and train them to handle the chemicals appropriately.

Major changes to the Hazard Communication Standard in 2012:

- **Hazard classification:** Provides specific criteria for classification of health and physical hazards, as well as classification of mixtures.
- **Labels:** Chemical manufacturers and importers will be required to provide a label that includes a harmonized signal word, pictogram, and hazard statement for each hazard class and category. Precautionary statements must also be provided.
- **Safety Data Sheets:** Will now have a specified 16-section format.
- **Information and training:** Employers are required to train workers by December 1, 2013 on the new labels elements and safety data sheets format to facilitate recognition and understanding.

SOURCE: <http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/index.html>

What is a Safety Data Sheet (SDS)?

The new Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) requires that the chemical manufacturer, distributor, or importer provide Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) (formerly MSDs or Material Safety Data Sheets) for each hazardous chemical to users to communicate information on these hazards.

The SDS has 16 sections which include information such as:

- The properties of each chemical;
- The physical, health, and environmental health hazards;
- Protective measures;
- Safety precautions for handling, storing, and transporting the chemical.
- The information contained in the SDS must be in English (although it may be in other languages as well)

✚ Employers must ensure that the SDSs are readily accessible to employees for all hazardous chemicals in their workplace.

Source: Osha Website <http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/osha-brief.html>