

Final Rule Modifying the HCS to Maintain Alignment with the GHS

OSHA has updated its Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) to primarily align with Revision 7 of the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). The final rule was published on May 20, 2024, with an effective date of July 19, 2024.

The final rule updates the criteria for several health and physical hazard classes to provide better information to employees. It also contains revised provisions for labeling small containers and the relabeling of chemicals that have been released for shipment; amendments to the contents of Safety Data Sheets; and new provisions related to concentrations or concentration ranges being claimed as trade secrets. The enhancements to labels and SDSs will increase worker protections by providing more readable and comprehensive information. In addition, the revised precautionary statements will improve safe handling, storage, and disposal.

Why modify the HCS

There have been significant revisions to the GHS since OSHA's last HCS update in 2012. They include updated hazard classes and categories, improved readability of the required information on the label, and additional guidance for hazard classification, including the use of alternative test methods. Similar to our major trading partners such as the European Union and Canada, OSHA is primarily aligning with Revision 7 of the GHS. This final rule also addresses implementation issues arising since 2012 and better coordinates with other federal agencies' requirements (e.g., EPA, DOT).

OSHA's major changes to the HCS

Hazard classification

- Health Hazards (Appendix A)
 - Updated skin corrosion/irritation and serious eye damage/eye irritation chapters
 - Non-animal test methods from Revision 8 were added to skin corrosion/irritation to promote use of alternative methods

- Physical Hazards (Appendix B)
 - Updated the flammable gases and aerosol hazard classes
 - Added a new hazard class: Desensitized Explosives

Labels:

- Updated Appendix C to include label elements and precautionary statements for the new and revised hazard classes and categories
- In paragraph (f), OSHA provided flexibility for labeling of:
 - bulk shipments of chemicals contained in tanker truck, railcar, or intermodal containers
 - chemical containers that have been released for shipment
 - small packages (100 ml or less) including very small packages (3 ml or less)

Safety Data Sheets: Updated sections 2, 3, 9 and 11. With this revised standard, OSHA finalized the use of prescribed concentration ranges when an ingredient's concentration is withheld as a trade secret.

Dates: The final HCS is effective on July 19, 2024 and includes a multi-year tiered transition period (see below).

Compliance Dates and Requirements

Compliance Date	Requirement(s)	Who
18 months after effective date	Update labels and SDSs for substances	Chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers
24 months after effective date	Update workplace labels, hazard communication program and training as necessary	Employers

Compliance Date	Requirement(s)	Who
36 months after effective date	Update labels and SDSs for mixtures	Chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers
42 months after effective date	Update workplace labels, hazard communication program and training as necessary	Employers
Transition Period - July 19, 2024 to the effective completion dates noted above*	May comply with either 29 CFR 1910.1200 (this final standard), or the previous standard, or both	Chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, and employers
*During this transition period, employers may comply with either the HCS effective on October 1, 2023 or the final rule published on May 20, 2024. The table above explains the effective dates and requirements.		

Impact of the HCS: The final rule will either provide cost savings or the costs would be less than one percent of revenues or ten percent of profits for every affected industry. The net cost savings of the final rule are expected to be \$29.8 million per year (seven percent discount rate).

Major changes from the proposal: OSHA has reviewed the record and the final rule reflects the agency's response to the comments submitted. The major changes include:

- Clarification of (d)(1) to better articulate which hazards must be evaluated and the hazard information that is required on the label versus the SDS.
- Adding non-animal test methods from Revision 8 to skin corrosion/irritation to promote use of alternative methods.
- Deciding not to finalize the proposed addition of the date of release for shipment on the label.
- Lengthening the implementation period (see above).
- Clarification of how to classify "corrosive to the respiratory tract".

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For more information: OSHA's website details the implementation of the final rule and provides a side-by-side comparison of HCS 2012 to HCS 2024. Please see [Hazard Communication – Overview](#).

Workers' rights

Workers have the right to:

- Working conditions that do not pose a risk of serious harm.
- Receive information and training (in a language and vocabulary the worker understands) about workplace hazards, methods to prevent them, and the OSHA standards that apply to their workplace.
- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- File a complaint asking OSHA to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following OSHA's rules. OSHA will keep all identities confidential.
- Exercise their rights under the law without retaliation, including reporting an injury or raising health and safety concerns with their employer or OSHA.

If a worker has been retaliated against for using their rights, they must file a [whistleblower complaint](#) with OSHA as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after learning of the adverse action. For additional information on worker rights, see [OSHA's Workers page](#).

How to contact OSHA

OSHA's mission is to assure America's workers have safe and healthful working conditions free from unlawful retaliation. OSHA carries out its mission by setting and enforcing standards; enforcing anti-retaliation provisions of the OSH Act and other federal whistleblower laws; providing and supporting training, outreach, education, and assistance; and ensuring state OSHA programs are at least as effective as federal OSHA, furthering a national system of worker safety and health protections. For more information, visit [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov) or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

