

OSHA Announces Alignment of Hazcom Standard with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals

Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels held a teleconference March 20 to announce the final rule for the long-awaited update to OSHA's Hazard Communication standard that aligns it with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).

Hazcom 2012, as it is known at the agency, communicates information about chemical hazards in the workplace "more simply, clearly and effectively," said Solis. It "empowers [workers] with the best information about the chemicals they handle in the workplace," she added.

"Exposure to hazardous chemicals is one of the most serious threats facing American workers today," said Solis. "Revising OSHA's Hazard Communication standard will improve the quality and consistency of hazard information, making it safer for workers to do their jobs and easier for employers to stay competitive." The final rule will be published in the *Federal Register* March 26. The standard goes into effect 60 days after that publication date. **Companies that work with chemicals are expected to have trained their employees on how to read the new material safety data sheets (MSDS) and labels by December 1, 2013, and to have all employee training completed by June 1, 2016.**

This change in the OSHA Hazcom regulations will affect most, if not all employers in the U.S. Hazcom violations were the 3rd most cited by OSHA during the 2011 Fiscal Year.

Steps to transition here: <http://ehstoday.com/environment/transition-ghs-workplace-1211/>

OSHA guide to GHS here: <http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/ghs.html#4.3>