



# WHMIS 2015 – Teacher Primer

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) 2015 is the standardized plan for sharing information about the safe use of hazardous materials.

As you may already be aware, WHMIS has been updated to reflect the United Nations' initiative—Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)—and aligns Canada's hazard classification and communication requirements with the United States and other trading partners. The original WHMIS is now referred to as WHMIS 1988.

## Overview of Changes

WHMIS (1988)	WHMIS (2015)
<b>6 Hazard Classes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Divisions</li> </ul>	<b>32 Hazard Classes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple hazard categories</li> </ul>
<b>Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 Sections</li> <li>Update required every 3 years or as needed</li> </ul>	<b>Safety Data Sheet (SDS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 Sections</li> <li>Update required only as needed</li> </ul>
<b>Symbols (8)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black circle</li> </ul> 	<b>Pictograms (10)*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red square on one of its points</li> </ul> 

*\*It is important to note that there are some new hazard symbols (pictograms) in WHMIS 2015*

## What does this mean for you?

In your course(s), students should be educated and trained in WHMIS if they: (1) work with hazardous products; or (2) may be exposed to hazardous products in the course of someone else's activities in the classroom. Some of you may simply be teaching WHMIS as part of a course curriculum.

## Which WHMIS should I teach to students?

It is important to educate yourself, as well as your students, on the WHMIS 2015 hazard classification system. As of December 2018, it will be a requirement for all Canadian workplaces to be using the WHMIS 2015 hazard classification system. This means that you will likely see products purchased for the classroom this year with the new labels.

Students and staff must have education and training related to the WHMIS hazard classification systems to which they will be exposed. Therefore, if both types of hazard symbols (i.e., WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015) are present on hazardous product containers in the classroom, then students should be educated in both classification systems.

## Educational courses and teaching tools available for WHMIS 2015:

- [www.whmis.org](http://www.whmis.org) (Resources, e-Course)
- [http://www.ccohs.ca/teach\\_tools/chem\\_hazards/whmis\\_basics.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/teach_tools/chem_hazards/whmis_basics.html) (Teaching Tools)

***WHMIS training (such as from an online course) never expires, but anyone who obtains it should keep their e-certificate on file for future employers. Those with training should be aware that anyone who cannot apply the information from their training can expect to be re-trained (and potentially, asked to re-take the online WHMIS training course).***

## Students should be able to answer these questions for hazardous products they work with:

- **What are the hazards of the product?/ Where can I get further information?**  
Students should be oriented through hands-on training for specific products used in their courses, but they should also be educated on how to read hazardous product symbols, labels and Safety Data Sheets.
- **How do I protect myself from these hazards?** (e.g., personal protective equipment, safe handling procedures, etc.)
- **What do I do in case of an emergency?** (i.e., what are the procedures in our classroom environment?)

**Hazardous Products in the Classroom:** You are responsible for ensuring that appropriate control measures are in place for the hazardous products you use for your courses. This means hazardous materials must be identified and properly controlled, stored and used. Original product labels should be kept visible and legible—if not, you must either ask for a replacement label from the supplier or provide a workplace label.

A workplace label: (1) Identifies the product; (2) Provides information on the safe handling of the product; and (3) Indicates a Safety Data Sheet is available. You must provide a workplace label for any product that has been decanted into a smaller container for use. Containers of 100 mL or less must have their product identified, but do not have to have precautionary or hazard statements on the label. Containers of 3 mL or less can have a removable label (if such a label will interfere with normal use of the product).

In addition, if a product label (supplier or workplace) is updated to a WHMIS 2015 label, the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be replaced with the product's WHMIS 2015 Safety Data Sheet.

## Here are some things you should be able to demonstrate:

- Location of the MSDSs (1988) or SDSs (2015) for the hazardous products used (must be 'readily available' to yourself, and students)
- Appropriate labelling of hazardous products used in your courses
- Education and training records kept for students (or other staff) who work with (or may be exposed to) the hazardous products in your courses. Education and training processes for WHMIS should be reviewed annually.
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in good working condition (Note: PPE as required by the SDSs for your hazardous products)

**Purchasing Hazardous Products:** All suppliers (manufacturers, importers, and distributors) must provide information in compliance with WHMIS 2015 by September 1, 2018. This means that any new hazardous products you buy for school or classroom use after next fall (Sept.1, 2018) should have WHMIS 2015 information (symbols, labels, Safety Data Sheets, etc.). However, this year you will likely already see WHMIS 2015 labels on new products you purchase.

For more information: [wcb.pe.ca/Workplace/Publications](http://wcb.pe.ca/Workplace/Publications) → Guide to WHMIS 2015 for PEI Employers