



Australian Government

Comcare



# GHS— What you need to know

## ADVICE FOR DUTY HOLDERS UNDER THE *WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 2011*—IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS (GHS)

The *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* (GHS) is a single internationally agreed system of chemical classification and hazard communication through labelling and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). The GHS is published by the United Nations and includes harmonized criteria for the classification of:

- > physical hazards
- > health hazards
- > environmental hazards.

The model Work Health and Safety Regulations reference the Third Revised Edition of the GHS, with an initial five year transitional period for full implementation by 1 January 2017. After this date, SDS and labels must be GHS compliant although inventory already in the supply chain, labelled under the Approved Criteria, may continue to be consumed. The introduction of the GHS classifications impacts on various requirements including information, exposure standards and labels.

### WHAT SHOULD PERSONS CONDUCTING A BUSINESS OR UNDERTAKING (PCBU) DO?

To prepare for transition to the GHS PCBUs should:

1. identify their organisation's deadlines
2. develop an implementation schedule suitable for the needs of their workplace
3. review inventory holdings and use
4. ensure procurement processes support the supply of GHS compliant stock
5. review new SDS to confirm the hazardous nature of the chemical which may involve new controls
6. update systems; risk assessments, chemical registers and response plans
7. train and/or inform your workers on the new labels and SDS

### WHAT DUTIES DO PCBUs HAVE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF WORKPLACE CHEMICALS?

- > All PCBUs must ensure that a hazardous chemical used, handled, disposed of, or stored at the workplace is done so correctly; ensuring risk management systems, strategies and procedures are in place to minimise risks to the health and wellbeing of workers and the environment.
- > Consult with workers to ensure hazards are identified and that measures chosen to minimise risks are effective and will be followed.
- > Provide training and/or information to workers in the use of hazardous chemicals, health surveillance and organisational reporting requirements. PCBUs must ensure the current SDS for the hazardous chemical is available.
- > If a hazardous chemical is manufactured at the workplace, or transferred from its original container, the PCBU must ensure labelling is GHS compliant.
- > If a PCBU uses pipe work to convey hazardous chemicals they must ensure that the hazardous chemical is identified by a label, sign or another way on or near the pipe work. The Regulations do not specifically require GHS compliant labelling for pipe work where other markings clearly suffice.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the [GHS information page](#) on the Comcare website or email Comcare at [GHS@comcare.gov.au](mailto:GHS@comcare.gov.au)