

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS CLASSIFICATION

THE GLOBALLY
HARMONISED
SYSTEM (GHS) IS A
GLOBAL SYSTEM OF
CLASSIFYING
CHEMICALS,
PREPARING LABELS
AND SAFETY DATA
SHEETS (SDS), AND
COMMUNICATING
THEIR HAZARDS

Australia and New Zealand manage hazardous chemicals through national, state and territory regulations including:

- *Harmonised Work Health and Safety Regulations* (Commonwealth, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory)
- *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*
- *Western Australia Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996*
- *New Zealand Work Health and Safety Act 2016*

On 1st January 2021, Australia commenced a two-year transition period to the **Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals 7th Edition (GHS7)**.

New Zealand adopted the GHS7, commencing 30th April 2021.

During this transition, manufacturers and importers may use either GHS3 or GHS7.

From 1st January 2023, only GHS7 may be used in Australia. Moving to GHS7 ensures that Australia and New Zealand stays up to date with international best practice and our trading partners.

What is the GHS & why is it important?

The Globally Harmonised System (GHS) is a global system of classifying chemicals, preparing labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS), and communicating their hazards. The GHS is managed by the United Nations (UN) and aims to provide users with safe, consistent, practical and easy to understand information about chemical hazards.

The GHS on its own does not have any enforcement powers, and is voluntary. However, many countries, including Australia and New Zealand, have written the GHS into their Workplace / Occupational Health and Safety (WHS/OHS) regulations.

As of the 2nd August 2021, Safe Work Australia reports that the following jurisdictions have updated their regulations to include the GHS requirements:

- Commonwealth Territories
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- South Australia
- Victoria

As of 2nd August 2021, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia are yet to amend their regulations.



Local WHS/OHS regulations outline the obligations for workplace controllers and operators in regard to the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

What are your responsibilities?

The Work/Occupational Health & Safety (WHS/OHS) regulations implemented in each jurisdiction outlines the obligations for workplace controllers and operators. These include the following:

Hazardous Chemicals Register - A hazardous chemicals register is a full list of the hazardous chemicals stored and used at the workplace. A hazardous chemicals register is required under the WHS/OHS Regulations to be prepared and kept up to date. The hazardous chemicals register must be made available to all workers involved in the use, storage and handling of hazardous chemicals and to anyone else who may be affected by chemicals in the workplace.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) - A SDS is a document that provides detailed information about a hazardous chemical. SDS provides information on managing the risks of a hazardous chemical in the workplace. A safety data sheet should be obtained from the supplier or manufacturer of the hazardous chemical on first supply to the workplace. SDS should be maintained and kept up to date (reviewed and reissued every 5 years), be available in a readily accessible location and contain local (Australian or New Zealand) contact details.

Labelling - All hazardous chemical containers that are used, stored, or handled at a workplace must be correctly labelled.

A compliant hazardous chemical label must include the following:

- Product identifier
- Name, address and telephone number of the manufacturer
- Hazard pictograms (as specified in the GHS)
- Hazard statements
- Information about the hazards and the expiry date of the chemical (if applicable).



Labels should be kept in good condition and be clearly legible at all times.

Secondary Containment - A spill containment system for hazardous chemicals must be supplied, if necessary. Where there is a risk of a spill or a leak of a hazardous chemical in a solid or liquid form, provision should be made at the workplace where the hazardous chemical is used, handled, generated or stored. Spill containment provisions may include, but are not limited to secondary containment/bunding, spill kits, leak detection systems etc.

Placarding and Manifest - If quantities of hazardous chemicals exceed the manifest thresholds outlined in the applicable regulations, a manifest must be prepared for those hazardous chemicals and the regulator is to be notified. If quantities of hazardous chemicals exceed the placard thresholds outlined in the applicable regulations, specific placards must be displayed at the entrance to the workplace and the location the hazardous chemical is stored.

For additional information relating to the management of hazardous chemicals in your jurisdiction refer to the table on the next page.

Table 1: Management of Hazardous Chemicals by jurisdiction

	NSW	ACT	QLD	NT	SA	TAS	WA	VIC	New Zealand
Overarching Legislation	Work Health and Safety Regulation (NSW) 2017, Chapter 7	Work Health and Safety Regulation (ACT) 2011, Chapter 7	Work Health and Safety Regulation (QLD) 2011, Chapter 7	Work Health and Safety Regulation (NT) 2011, Chapter 7	Work Health and Safety Regulation (SA) 2012, Chapter 7	Work Health and Safety Regulation (TAS) 2012, Chapter 7	Occupational Safety and Health Regulations (WA) 1996, Part 5	Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (Vic) 2017, Chapter 4, and Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations (Vic) 2012	Health and Safety at Work General Risk and Workplace Regulations (NZ) 2017

Applicable Codes of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Codes of Practice: Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace (SafeWork Australia, 2020) National Codes of Practice: Labelling of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals (SafeWork Australia, 2020) National Codes of Practice: Preparation of Safety Data Sheets for Hazardous Chemicals (SafeWork Australia, 2020) 	Compliance Code: Hazardous Substances (WorkSafe Vic, 2019) Code of Practice: The Storage and Handling of Dangerous Goods (WorkSafe Vic, 2013)	Quick Guide: Safety data sheets in the workplace (WorkSafe NZ, 2017) Quick Guide: Inventory requirements for hazardous substances (WorkSafe NZ, 2019)
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Harmonised system for classification labelling

- Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (UNECE, 2017) 7th Edition

Applicable Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS/NZS 3383: The Storage and Handling of mixed classes of dangerous goods, in packages and intermediate bulk containers AS 4332: The storage and handling of gases in cylinders AS 1940: The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids AS 4326: The storage and handling of oxidizing agents AS/NZS 1596: LPG Gas - Storage and handling AS/NZS 4452: The storage and handling of toxic substances AS 3780: The storage and handling of corrosive substances AS/NZS 4681: The storage and handling of Class 9 (miscellaneous) dangerous goods and articles AS 2187: Explosives - Storage, transport and use AS 2714: The storage and handling of organic peroxides AS/NZS 2022: Anhydrous ammonia - Storage and handling
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How can Greencap assist?

Since its foundation as an asbestos consultancy in 1984, Greencap has built a wealth of experience and expertise in the management of hazardous materials. Greencap’s team of highly experienced HazMat consultants can assist in the development of a range of systems and risk control strategies to meet compliance requirements.

Please contact the team today to learn more.

Email healthandsafety@greencap.com.au
or visit greencap.com.au

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