

INFORMATION

WHMIS Worker Training Requirements

What are employers required to do?

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) provide workers with hazard information on products they use in the workplace. While this hazard information is important, it can only reduce injuries, disease and illness when workers understand and use this material. For this reason, the regulations require the employer to implement a WHMIS worker training program.

The training program must be developed for each employer's workplace and be reviewed annually. The Occupational Health Committee (OHC) or the worker health and safety representative if present, must be consulted in the development and implementation of the program and during its annual review. Where neither a committee nor a representative is present, the workers must be consulted.

The training itself can be conducted by another organization, person for group. However, the final responsibility for providing training remains with the employer.

Who must be trained?

Anyone who works with hazardous material or could be affected by a leak or spill will require training. However, all workers will not need the same level of training. For example, training for warehouse staff may only need to include the safe handling of products and what to do when a spill occurs. Industrial worker will need extensive training on the safe use of all hazardous products in their workplace. Naturally, office workers and retail cashiers will not require as comprehensive a training program.

What is the goal of worker training?

Worker training ensures that workers are able to apply the information needed to protect their health and safety

The Regulations require performance oriented training for each workplace. There is no standard course for everyone. The test of a successful program is whether the workers are able to use proper safety procedures for the products they handle and know why these procedures are required.

Review the training needs each year, when workers' duties change, or when new information is received.

What content is required?

The content of a worker training program can be divided into two main areas.

First, workers need to understand the WHMIS system (such as MSDS, labels and symbols). This may be called *general training* and could be given in a classroom, setting with participants from many different work areas.

Second, workplace training must be provided that is specific to:

- (1) the danger of the materials used; and
- (2) the appropriate safety measure that must be taken. This training should be given by supervisors.

Topics shown in the chart on the reverse side of this bulletin should be included in worker training.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

General Training		Workplace training	
TOPICS	CONTENT	TOPICS	CONTENT
Responsibilities	Supplier, employer, worker	Hazardous substances	Listed and identified in the workplace
Controlled products	Information on hazard classes, WHMIS symbols	Hazards	Clearly communicated to workers. Control measures in effect
Supplier/workplace labels	Content requires and the purpose and significance of the content	Material safety data sheets (MSDSs)	Location and use in the workplace
Other labels	Consumer products and pest control products exempted from WHMIS. Product identifiers (such as colour coding for pipes)	Labels	Systems used in the workplace
Material safety data sheets (MSDSs)	Content required. The purpose and significance of the content. Formats allowed	Safe work procedures	Use, storage, handling and disposal of hazardous substances. Emergencies. Fugitive emissions

If a workplace has only one or two controlled products, it will be sufficient to train the worker on the hazards and safe handling procedures for those products. Workers in work areas with a number of controlled products must be able to access all of the required information.

Worker training in safe work practices must also include products that are exempt from WHMIS labeling and MSDS requirements, such as consumer products. The employer must ensure that workers understand hazard information and safety precautions on product labels. More information may be required if a product will be used under unusual circumstances.

Resources available

WorkSafe Saskatchewan in conjunction with the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) offer an online course on the general aspects of WHMIS. It can be used in conjunction with worksite- specific training to complete WHMIS training. This low cost course can be found at www.worksafesask.ca

Occupational Health and Safety provides WHMIS publications, videos and courses for OHCs and worker health and safety representatives. Occupational Health and Safety also provides information on agencies, training consultants and retailers of safety supplies that can help employers to provide WHMIS worker training.

The CCOHS in Hamilton, Ontario provides many WHMIS publications, MSDSs and other resources. See www.ccohs.ca or contact the CCOHS at: 1-800-668-4284 or

E-mail: inquiries@ccohs.ca.

Worker education, labels and MSDSs are the three methods used by WHMIS to provide information to workers. A carefully implemented and maintained workplace WHMIS program will lead to a safer and healthier work environment.