

Global Harmonized System

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) - Globally Harmonized System (GHS) safety data sheets (SDS) will replace material safety data sheets (MSDS) completely by June 1 2016. By December 1, 2013, all Army employees including Soldiers, Army civilians, and embedded contractors must complete initial GHS training. Additional GHS information and training may be found at: <https://safety.army.mil/soh/OCCUPATIONALHEALTH/GloballyHarmonizedSystemGHS/tabid/2389/Default.aspx>

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) revised its Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) to align with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) and published it in the Federal Register in March 2012 (77 FR 17574). Two significant changes contained in the revised standard require the use of new labeling elements and a standardized format for Safety Data Sheets (SDSs), formerly known as, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs). The new label elements and SDS requirements will improve worker understanding of the hazards associated with the chemicals in their workplace.

OSHA, by adopting GHS, is simplifying Hazard Communication. GHS has categorized hazards into three broad categories—Physical, Health and Environmental. SDS will be in a standardized format making it easier to locate required information about hazardous chemicals. The labeling system under GHS has also been simplified with specific and standardized hazard warnings.

OSHA is phasing in the GHS specific requirements over several years (December 1, 2013 to June 1, 2016).

- By December 1, 2013, all employees including Soldiers, Army civilians, and embedded contractors must be trained on the new label elements and SDS format.
- By June 1, 2015 all chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors, and employers must comply with GHS provisions except distributors may ship products labeled by manufacturers under the old system until December 1, 2015.
- By June 1, 2016 full compliance with GHS, update alternative workplace labeling and hazard communication program as necessary, and provide additional employee training for newly identified physical or health hazards.