



## OSHA Revisions to the Hazard Communication Standard

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

The University of Tennessee  
Municipal Technical Advisory Service  
1610 University Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37921-6741  
865-974-0411 phone  
865-974-0423 fax  
[www.mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)

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## OSHA Revisions to the Hazard Communication Standard

**Reference Number:** MTAS-1892

In the March 2012 edition of the Federal Register (77 FR 17574), OSHA published its revisions to the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (HCS). The revisions align OSHA requirements with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals, commonly called the GHS. To provide time for compliance, OSHA established a phase in program for the requirements over a period of several years. The transition period ended June 1, 2016.

The revisions improve the quality and consistency of hazard information in the workplace, making it safer for workers by providing easily understandable information on appropriate handling and safe use of hazardous chemicals. Two significant changes in the 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 improve worker understanding of the hazards associated with the chemicals in their workplace. The standard applies to all chemicals known to be present in the workplace in such a manner that employees may be exposed under normal conditions or in a foreseeable emergency.

Employers have a duty to provide adequate training on these changes to the communication standards at no cost to all employees (full-time, part-time or temporary). Employers must also include volunteer firefighters for purpose of the training and must train all employees even if the employees are illiterate or have learning disabilities. Employers must also measure the effectiveness of their training by verbal recall and evaluate training through employee interviews.

The employer must maintain SDS for as long as the chemical is used or stored. You must maintain the chemical list for 30 years

Because TN is a federally approved "state-plan" the TN Occupational Safety and Health Act (TOSH Act) adopted the federal OSHA standards but some of the provisions of the TN Hazardous Chemical Right to Know Act are still in effect. Tennessee OSHA (TOSHA) has a video presentation that an agency can download and use for training on the revisions and the GHS. The person who conducts the training should be familiar with OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard. The video (***TOSHA Hazard Communications: Protecting Yourself from Chemical Hazards***) is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F41FCs2V5uE> [1].

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### Links:

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F41FCs2V5uE>

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