

The Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals-what is it and what parts will apply to schools

- it will be introduced on a State basis from 1/1/2017. Some States have yet to mandate the GHS (Victoria for example) but still require the communication of chemical hazards.
- it introduces, via the SDS, signal words, hazard statements and precautionary statements that replace the risk ® and safety phrases in use on the MSDS.
- there are nine pictograms to be used in place of the dangerous goods diamonds (if the chemical was a dangerous good) They refer to environmental, physical and health hazards
- it does not replace the dg system for transport of chemicals and the dg classification remains in place and is still a valuable tool to use for safe storage of laboratory chemicals.
- you will NOT have to replace or dispose of chemicals in your laboratory that are labelled under the old system
- it is incumbent on manufacturers, importers and suppliers to supply a GHS compliant safety data sheet, a determination if a chemical is hazardous, classification according to the GHS and correctly labelled hazardous chemicals
- from 1/1/2017 suppliers must supply hazardous chemicals which have been classified and users must only accept correctly labelled and classified chemicals.
- pictograms OR dg diamonds can be used but not on the same label
- precautionary statements address prevention, response, storage, disposal and a general statement as required
- there is a signal word for each label, either danger or warning
- the minimum information that has to appear on a label for small (< 500mL) containers is the chemical name or product identifier, a pictogram or hazard statement. Guidance for this is provided in the Code of Practice for labelling
- reduced labelling is also permitted for wastes although it is recommended to have as much information as is relevant to the hazards
- of the nine hazard classes as listed by the pictograms, there are further hazard categories within some of the classes-see Appendix D of the above referenced Code of Practice. For each hazard category within each hazard class the relevant signal word, pictogram, hazard statement and precautionary statements are provided in this Appendix.
- there are additional non GHS hazard statement for physical and health hazards which are used in Australia. These are in Appendix D at the end. They are to be used as applicable and include such hazards as explosive when dry, react violently with water and contact with water liberates a flammable gas

Some useful references:

ADG Code 7th edition <http://www.ntc.gov.au/ViewPage.aspx?documentid=01147>

GHS revision 3 official text-this is the current version

http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs_welcome_e.html

GHS pictograms for download:

www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/pictograms.html

The best reference of all is www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au . The above Code of Practice for Labelling and there is also one for preparation of Safety Data Sheets are also found here within the WHS section. This site is a wealth of information and has a list of the actual hazardous substances, the hazardous substances information service or HSIS for download. The HSIS can be downloaded with a search function and is the first port of call to see if a particular chemical is on the list.