

## Hazard Communication Standard Video Script

### For Assistant Secretary David Michaels

- Everyone working around hazardous chemicals and other toxic substances has a right to know of possible dangers and how to protect themselves. Ensuring that everyone knows the potential risks ... what to do if exposed ... and how to respond. ... have always been at the heart of the OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard since it was issued almost 30 years ago.
- Since that time, the Haz com Standard has been saving lives and protecting the safety and health of employees and employers in workplaces with potentially serious hazards. Thousands of injuries, illnesses and deaths have been prevented because of the training, labeling and information required by this rule.
- Now it's time for another step ... OSHA is making good protection even better. With the strong backing of unions and industry, OSHA is raising the bar ... improving the standard for safety and health for everyone.
- We are updating Haz Com to meet the needs of our changing world. Today we live and work in a global environment. Varying - and sometimes conflicting - national and international requirements can create confusion among those who need important, clear, concise information to protect themselves as quickly as possible.
- We are incorporating the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals - GHS for short -- into our Haz Com Standard.
- In taking this step, we are joining ranks with other nations to upgrade protections ... standardize hazard communication ... and reduce trade barriers. It's a win-win that will benefit all ... and after its implementation save millions of dollars each year.
- Historically under Haz Com, there are no firm rules for what a label or material safety data sheet should look like or how information is presented.
- Now, under the new standard, instead of having a variety of different safety data sheets and labels, the hazard warnings will now be the same regardless of who produces it or where it is produced. And, even more importantly, the message is the same regardless of who sees it.
- There's a big difference. The new labels alert people to potential hazards and provide important details on how to handle chemicals safely. They tell you not only what you need to know ... but also what you need to do in a way that everyone can clearly and easily understand.
- Here's an example. In the past warning labels for a toxic chemical could have looked like this ... or like this ... Both of these sample labels for the same chemical would have been in compliance with OSHA's requirement. But now ... under the new, updated standard ... a prototype label would look more like this ...

- In fact, this step represents more than just pictograms and labels. It's a whole new system - one in which everyone is using the same underlying criteria to classify chemicals.
- Behind every image are uniform organization and classification systems that spell out the potential hazards and protections in terms that everyone, worldwide, can understand ... whether you are working with chemicals, manufacturing them, transporting them or supervising employees exposed to them.
- In this new system, every hazardous chemical and substance not only carries a uniform label with information that is easier to understand ... but also provides warnings that are clearer ... necessary action more obvious ... and protections readily apparent.
- In short, the Haz Comm Standard aligned with GHS provides a simple alert system to save lives and prevent injuries and illnesses worldwide.
- The new system has been years in the making. It's already a reality in a growing number of countries. And even more are taking steps in the same direction.
- This harmonized, international system will help reduce trade barriers in the global chemical market by aligning the U.S. with Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and other nations.
- When the Haz Comm Standard took effect in 1985, workers got the right to know ... that is the right to know what their potential exposure to hazards might be.
- But the right to have labels or Material Safety Data Sheets did not always mean that it was easy for workers to UNDERSTAND that information. Today, with the new, globally harmonized standard, workers are now getting the right to understand. That means to not only knowing about potential hazards ... but also better understanding what the warning means, what to do if exposed and how to protect one's self.
- With this new system, workers in the United States ... and eventually workers worldwide ... will have the same, simple, concise information they need to understand how to prevent injuries and illnesses ... and save lives. Nothing could be more important than that.