

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is a Canada-wide information system providing specific vital information about hazardous materials in the workplace (called "controlled products" in the legislation).

WHMIS requires that suppliers of potentially hazardous materials convey specified hazard information to employers, and that employers pass that hazard information on to their workers for their protection.

WHMIS has three major components:

1) WHMIS labels

They provide the essential information needed in order to handle a particular product safely. Under WHMIS, controlled products should always be labelled. There are two main kinds of labels:

Supplier label – Every controlled product a workplace receives from a supplier must have a complete WHMIS supplier label (see illustration). If that is not the case, or if the label is incomplete, the product cannot be used. All supplier labels must be written in English and in French, and have a distinctive slash-marked border.

Workplace label – As long as a controlled product remains in its original container with a supplier label on it, no additional labelling is required. However, if put into another container for use in the workplace, the product will require a workplace label. Workplace labels are less detailed than supplier labels and do not have a prescribed format. Still, they must contain the product identifier, information for safe handling, and a reference to the MSDS.

2) Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

An MSDS is a document that provides nine categories of information about the product's physical characteristics and its hazardous properties. A 16-category format also exists and is acceptable.

slash-marked borders symbols for each product class English and French

product name

main hazards

precautions that should be taken

first aid measures

reference to the MSDS for more information

supplier

| | |
|---|---|
| METHANOL | MÉTHANOL |
| DANGER POISONOUS/ FLAMMABLE | DANGER POISON / INFLAMMABLE |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep away from heat, sparks and flame. Avoid contact with eyes and skin. Do not inhale vapours or mist. Do not swallow. Harmful if absorbed through the skin. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garder loin de la chaleur, des étincelles et de la flamme. Éviter tout contact avec les yeux et la peau. Ne pas respirer les vapeurs. Ne pas absorber. Nocif, si absorbé par la peau. |
| PRECAUTIONS | PRÉCAUTIONS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear chemical resistant goggles and gloves. Wash thoroughly after handling. Keep container tightly closed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Porter des lunettes et des gants résistants aux produits chimiques. Se laver minutieusement les mains après usage. Garder le contenant bien fermé. |
| FIRST AID | PREMIERS SOINS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of contact, flush eyes and skin with water for 15 minutes. If swallowed, induce vomiting. Get medical attention immediately. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> En cas de contact avec les yeux ou la peau, laver à grande eau pendant 15 minutes. Si avalé, provoquer le vomissement. Obtenir des soins médicaux immédiats. |
| SEE MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET VOIR FICHE SIGNALÉTIQUE | |
| WXYZ CHEMICAL COMPANY | |
| TESTVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK 506 123-4567 | |

Additional Resource Material
For more information about WHMIS, visit the following websites:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/index-eng.php
www.ccohs.ca/headlines/text51.html

Suppliers must provide an MSDS for each controlled product they sell or import.

Employers must ensure that up-to-date MSDSs are received and readily available to workers at all times. Workers must be educated in the content required on the data sheet and the applicable information on it.

3) Worker education

Under WHMIS, employers must ensure that **all workers working with or close to controlled products** are properly trained in the following:

- Hazards of the controlled products.
- Labelling and MSDS requirements.
- Procedures for safe use, storage, handling and disposal of controlled products, and procedures for dealing with fugitive emissions and emergencies.

Training provided to employees must be developed in consultation with the joint health and safety committee, if one exists. It should be reviewed at least annually or more frequently if required by a change in work conditions or available hazard information.

Certain exemptions from the requirement to provide labels and MSDSs exist. For their listing or for more information about WHMIS, see the New Brunswick *WHMIS Regulation 88-221*, contact WorkSafeNB at 1 800 222-9775, or visit us on the web at www.worksafenb.ca.

