

Hazard communication compliance deadline near

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The final deadline for compliance with the hazard communication regulation is June 1. The deadline marks the end of an almost three-year process to bring employers and product manufacturers and distributors in line with a global system of chemical labeling and classification. Dental practices should ensure they have updated written hazard communication plans, updated safety data sheets (SDS), appropriate labels on secondary containers and trained all staff on the new systems. The first training deadline was Dec. 1, 2013. Dental practices should complete all remaining changes by June 1.

The major changes to the Hazard Communication Standard include:

- **Hazard Classification:** Provides specific criteria for classification of health and physical hazards, as well as classification of mixtures. (The term "hazard classification" replaces the term "hazard determination.")
- **Labels:** Chemical manufacturers and importers will be required to provide a label that includes a harmonized signal word, pictogram and hazard statement for each hazard class and category. Precautionary statements must also be provided.
- **Safety Data Sheets:** Must be done in a specified 16-section format and order of information. (Note the word "material" was dropped, therefore the abbreviation "SDS" is used instead of "MSDS.")

OSHA made the changes to conform with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals, which experts believe to be a more effective system for communicating hazards to employers and workers. Manufacturers of products produced and sold around the world benefit from having to comply with one less set of regulations. Manufacturers had to use the new label format by June 1, 2015.

Employers are required to have a written hazard communication plan. CDA has an updated sample plan and PowerPoint presentations that can be used for employee training. These are available on cda.org/practicesupport. Staff training may be conducted by a knowledgeable dentist or staff person using OSHA and CDA materials, or by a consultant who specializes in this area. A thorough understanding of the new system by all staff is the goal of the required training.

Additional information on changes to the Hazard Communication Standard is available on federal OSHA's website, osha.gov.