

# Work **Safe!** Bulletin

## WHMIS and Cosmetics

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Many of the products used in the beauty industry contain chemicals which may pose potential risks for workers who repeatedly come into contact with them. Cosmetics are broadly defined as materials used in cleansing, improving, or altering the complexion, skin, hair or teeth, and includes deodorants or perfumes. The wide range of cosmetic materials can be divided into the following groups:



- ❑ **SKIN PREPARATIONS** including creams, lotions, perfumes, colours, powders and soaps
- ❑ **HAIR PREPARATIONS** including shampoos, lotions, oils, creams, fixatives, dyes and bleaches
- ❑ **NAIL PREPARATIONS** including lotions, polishes, colours and hardeners
- ❑ **MISCELLANEOUS COSMETICS** including deodorants, mud packs, hair removers, etc.

Cosmetic materials used in the beauty industry contain many potentially toxic materials, including flammable solvents, synthetic and natural colouring agents, preservatives, bleaches, and peroxides to name but a few.

These products and chemicals would normally result in the products being regulated by the *Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)* as a controlled product. Cosmetics are partially exempted from WHMIS because they are not covered by the **Hazardous Products Act** and Controlled Products Regulations. They are already regulated under the **Food and Drugs Act**. This means that the workplace will not receive a **WHMIS** Material Safety Data Sheet (**MSDS**) or a **WHMIS** supplier label when the products are purchased from a supplier or distributor.

Under provincial WHMIS legislation an employer is still required to educate all workers who use or are potentially exposed to controlled products in addition to the application of workplace labels if the product is decanted into another container. Workers must be informed of all hazard information related to the use, storage and handling of these materials.

**AN EMPLOYER IS NOT EXEMPT FROM THE RESPONSIBILITY TO EDUCATE WORKERS EVEN THOUGH THE SUPPLIER DOES NOT HAVE TO PROVIDE A MSDS AND SUPPLIER LABEL.**

An employer is required to educate workers using the information on the label of the product and any other information the employer is aware of or ought to be aware of. It is strongly recommended that the employer request a **MSDS** or other hazard information from the supplier or distributor of the product. Even though there is no mandatory requirement to provide a **MSDS** in the case of cosmetic products, many suppliers or distributors will make **MSDS's** available upon request.

The **MSDS** and product label contain specific information relating to:

- fire and explosion hazards
- reactivity with other materials
- toxicological properties
- preventive measures
- long and short term health hazards
- first aid measures.

The information on the **MSDS** will assist the employer to provide worker education which will address the following areas.

- Identify and describe the information categories on supplier labels, workplace labels and MSDS's.
- Describe and follow procedures for the safe use, storage, handling and disposal of a product.
- Follow procedures in case of an emergency involving a spill, release, fire or poisoning involving the product.
- Describe and follow procedures which are required where fumes or vapours are generated from the product.

**Provincial WHMIS legislation requires that an employer not use, store or handle any controlled product, including cosmetics, unless all provisions of the regulation are complied with. This includes proper education of workers and labelling of containers.**

For a copy of the WHMIS Regulation (MR 52/88), a WHMIS guideline, or to enquire about generic WHMIS training, call the Workplace Safety & Health Division at 204-945-3446 or access our web site at: [www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety).