

TERMS OF REFERENCE
for the General Issues Committee
for Canadian Implementation of the
Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)
June 18, 2004

Overview of the GHS:

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) provides a common and coherent basis to define and classify chemical hazards and communicate information on labels and safety data sheets. It provides the underlying infrastructure for a comprehensive national chemical safety program. After more than a decade of development, the GHS was formally adopted by the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the GHS in December 2002 and is now available for worldwide use and application. Canada has committed to the international goal for implementation of 2008 that was endorsed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002. The four key sectors in Canada that will be most affected by the implementation of the GHS are: pest control products, controlled products in the workplace, consumer chemical products and the transportation of dangerous goods.

Implementation of the GHS in Canada is now beginning. The sector-specific multi-stakeholder working groups and multi-stakeholder GHS General Issues Committee have been formed.

Guiding Principles of GHS Implementation in Canada:

- Harmonization to the greatest extent possible between the sectors.
- Harmonization to the greatest extent possible between NAFTA countries and other trading partners.

Purpose of the General Issues Committee:

To ensure harmonization to the greatest extent possible between the sectors in Canada and harmonization to the greatest extent possible between the NAFTA countries and other trading partners by:

- serve as a forum for open discussion and advice on matters concerning the implementation of the GHS in Canada
- ensuring Committee members are aware of all GHS implementation activities by receiving periodic reports on the work of the sectoral working groups.

Key Results:

The General Issues Committee will receive reports on the work of the Sectoral Working Groups and on NAFTA activities related to GHS. Key results could include, but is not limited to the following:

- identifying and addressing issues common to the Sectors,
- addressing issues which may arise as a result of potential changes to the current system, and
- recommending regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives to support the objectives of the GHS.

Membership

Chairperson:

The General Issues Committee be chaired by Policy and Programme Services Office, Product Safety Programme of Health Canada (PPSO).

General Membership:

- Members will consist of members selected from the Sectoral Working Groups and PPSO.
- Unless there is a specific agreement with the Chair in advance, only those members listed in Appendix 1 will represent the sectors and organizations.
- Expansion of the GIC will be possible at any time, with the understanding that this will not compromise progress to date.

Other:

- As required, persons with specific expertise may be invited by the Chair to attend the meetings to provide information. They will not hold membership status.
- Observer status at a meeting may be granted by the Chair to persons who have a special interest, but such people will not take part in any discussion of the GIC.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson:

- responsible for the work of the General Issues Committee, including the agenda, the minutes or meeting summaries, and other documentation as required.
- determines whether issues being discussed are germane to the task at hand, or whether they should be placed into a “parking lot” for discussion at a later date.
- reports the full range of positions and opinions from the General Issues Committee.

Secretariat

- in consultation with the Chairperson, prepares the agenda, the minutes or meeting summaries, and other documentation as required.

Note:

- At the discretion of the Chair, face-to-face meetings may be directed by a facilitator contracted by Health Canada.

Members:

- provide consolidated input when representing a sector or an organization.
- work co-operatively towards the common objective by providing comments and input on proposals or issues raised.
- provide supporting information to justify their suggestions or recommendations and should have that information available during meetings.
- report back to their respective sectors and organizations.

Note:

- In order to facilitate a free flow of discussion and information, it is important that all members understand when a representative is speaking on behalf of their organization, or is putting forth their own point of view. Accordingly, it will be assumed that a member is stating the view of their organization or association, unless otherwise indicated.
- If a person who has been delegated to represent an association or organization cannot be present at a meeting, then the association or organization can appoint an alternate. In order to keep the membership of the General Issues Committee consistent, there shall be only one alternate appointed.
- When a member leaves the employ of their association or organization, another member and/or alternate can be appointed.

Information Sharing

Meetings and teleconference calls will form the basis for Committee interaction.

- All substantive matters that will be discussed within the Committee will be shared with members at least four weeks before the meeting so as to allow input from the various associations' membership.

To facilitate information exchange and linkages, Health Canada will provide a GHS web page on its web site.

- All information placed on the Web site that is relevant to the General Issues Committee will be moderated by the Chair and be in compliance with Health Canada's policy on the posting of information.

Reporting Relationship:

The Chair is responsible to submit reports of the General Issues Committee to the Sectoral Working Groups regarding progress, recommendations made and will include:

- the full range of positions and opinions,
- updates on schedules, planned actions, and
- issues that remain unresolved.

Decision-making:

Consensus is a substantial agreement reached by the General Issues Committee. Consensus includes an attempt to resolve all concerns and objections.

The General Issues Committee will strive towards reaching consensus, however, when this is not possible, a significant majority should be sought.

- All points of view are valued.
- Dissenting positions and opinions will be recorded.

The General Issues Committee Chair will inform the Sectoral Working Groups regarding progress and recommendations made. The Sectoral Working Groups will evaluate all information provided by the General Issues Committee when making policy recommendations to the Minister. The Sectoral Working Groups are not bound by any recommendations provided by the Committee.

Costs:

Costs incurred by persons or organizations to attend meetings or to perform any other work related to the terms of reference are to be borne by those organizations or persons.

Through the Chair, the PPSO will provide meeting facilities and assume the cost of conference calls.

Frequency of Meetings:

Meetings, including conference calls, will be called on a regular basis by the Chair.

General Issues Committee on GHS Implementation

Name	Representing
Alan Cotterill	Chair (Health Canada)
Stephen Rathlou	Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association
Shannon Coombs	Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association
Peter MacLeod	CropLife
David Bennett	Canadian Labour Congress
David Leong	Ontario Ministry of Labour; FPT Occupational Safety and Health
Bob Whiting	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
Jacques Cerf	Canadian Chemical Producers Association
Jill Courtemanche	Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres
Otto Peter	Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association
Larry Stoffman	United Food and Commercial Workers Union
Brian Kohler	Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada
Yves Brissette	Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail; FPT-Occupational Safety and Health
Jeff Bennie	Public Service Alliance of Canada
Josée Potvin	Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission
Lisa Wardell	Consumer Chemicals Sector WG (Health Canada)
Abbey Klugerman	Workplace Chemicals Sector WG (Health Canada)
Pierre Petelle	Pest Control Products Sector WG (Health Canada)
Brenda Linke	Pest Control Products Sector WG (Health Canada)
David Lamarche / Greg Lawson	Transportation of Dangerous Goods Sector WG (Transport Canada)
Kim Headrick	International Liaison (Health Canada)
Brenda Everson	Secretariat (Health Canada)