

**General Issues Committee (GIC) for Canadian Implementation
of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS)
Meeting Summary
March 8, 2005**

In attendance:

Alan Cotterill	Stephen Rathlou	Shannon Coombs
Peter MacLeod	David Leong	Louis Laferriere
Jacques Cerf	Otto Peter	Colleen Dimock for Josée Potvin
Larry Stoffman	Yves Brissette	Bob Whiting
Jeff Bennie	Lisa Wardell	Abbey Klugerman
Pierre Petelle	Greg Lawson	Brenda Linke
Kim Headrick	Brenda Everson	

Observers:

Linda Toy

Regrets:

Jill Courtemanche David Bennett Brian Kohler David Lamarche

Purpose of the meeting:

To provide updates and status report on Canadian implementation and on international activities.

1 International update (Kim Headrick)

Key decisions of the 8th Session of the United Nations Subcommittee of Experts on Globally Harmonized System (UNSEGHS) held December 2004 includes:

- revised Annex 3 re: Precautionary Statements
- new guidance for Safety Data Sheets
- additional guidance for labelling
- work plan for new biennium
- The web links are as follows:
 - English <http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2004/ac10c4/ST-SG-AC10-C4-14e.doc>
 - French <http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2004/ac10c4/ST-SG-AC10-C4-14f.doc>
- Meetings and timelines for providing input:
 - The UNSEGHS meeting will be held July 11-13, 2005. Formal documents to UNSEGHS Secretariat are due April 15, 2005. The meeting of the Organisation for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Task Force for the Harmonization of Classification and Labelling (health hazards) will be held March 15-16, 2006. Documents are due 6 weeks before the meeting.

Europe is proposing to introduce GHS changes to EU legislation to come into force at the same time as REACH (their new legislation).

- Two studies underway: impact assessment and a study to identify the gaps and differences between the new GHS system and the existing systems.

Japan is working to classify substances currently classified in their system to be consistent with the GHS classification and preparing guidance manual to assist national classification work.

<http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2004/ac10c4/UN-SCEGHS-08-inf18e.pdf>

South Africa is preparing a national standard to incorporate the GHS into the national legislative framework and is developing training courses.

<http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2004/ac10c4/UN-SCEGHS-08-inf23e.pdf>

Capacity Building: Many workshops on GHS awareness, training and capacity building by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

http://www.unitar.org/cwm/calendar.htm#INTERNATIONAL_MEETINGS

2 Update on the US (Kim Headrick)

- OSHA and the EPA have their situational analysis on their web sites. Links can be found on the HC GHS web site. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has been having bilateral discussions with Health Canada.
- NAFTA activities:
 - NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides: GHS is the basis for discussions on harmonizing pesticide labels. This is currently government only discussions.
 - Occupational Safety and Health Working Group: there are discussions on harmonizing workplace chemical classification and hazard communication

3 Update on Canada

Issues to be brought to the General Issues Committee from WHMIS Stakeholders (Alan Cotterill)

A letter with points for discussion was written by Abbey Klugerman on behalf of the WHMIS MOU F/P/T partners and other WHMIS stakeholders. As there was no time to distribute the letter to the GIC members, Alan Cotterill provided a summary and preliminary response to the letter during the meeting.

Action: Letter to be distributed and the members to submit additional comments.

[See Appendix for the additional comments.]

Summary of response from the meeting

- a Product convergence:
- it will be up to the regulators [regulating authority] to make the decision on how the regulations will be formed and whether or not to reference WHMIS.
 - important to maintain consistency as work and decisions progress.
- b Skin sensitization:
- Consumer Chemicals is looking at this issue via the Ad hoc Expert Group on Chronic Hazards.

Action: OECD report on skin sensitization to be distributed when available.

- c Physical hazards:
- for physical hazards, testing is required in WHMIS, Consumer Chemicals and TDG. [note: there is a correction in the Appendix.]
- d Coordination of Canadian Approach:
- the UNSEGHS will be addressing the application of building block approach.
 - one of the objectives of Canadian implementation is harmonization between the sectors.

Canada update:

- Work plan with new target dates is posted on web site
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/intactiv/ghs-sgh/com/gencom/doc/workplan-plan_travail_e.html
 - Technical consultation expected to be complete May-June 2005, economic analysis will be conducted July - November 2005. Government decision targetted for late 2005.
- Work of the ad hoc Environmental Hazards WG and ad hoc Chronic Hazards WG were summarized.
- The profile of GHS is increasing. Articles have been written in magazines. This is a good way to inform small business not represented in the sectoral working groups

Sectoral Working Group Updates (Sector Chairs)

- a Pest Control Products Sector Working Group (PSWG) (Pierre Petelle)
- Five teleconferences held in 2004 (physical hazards, skin corrosion/irritation, eye damage/irritation, skin sensitization, acute toxicity)
 - Draft Proposed Implementation Document is undergoing final reviews before distribution to PSWG for comment in late March - early April.
 - Comment period will be followed by a PSWG meeting to resolve any issues that may exist as a result of the document.
 - It should be noted that the document is considered dynamic and may be modified in light of developments in other sectors as well as the NAFTA partners.

- The NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides held a GHS teleconference in Feb. 2005. US EPA and PMRA participated. Updates were provided by each agency, including a summary of comments on the US White Paper on GHS. Next step will look at areas of different approach and ways to harmonize implementation.
- b Transportation of Dangerous Goods (Greg Lawson)
- The change in cut-point for flammable liquids (TDG Class 3 Packing Group III) will be included in the proposed Amendment #6 to the *TDG Regulations*. The regulatory amendment is currently being developed and will go through the regulatory process.
 - Change in cut-points for acute toxicity (oral, dermal, inhalation of dusts and mist) and changes with respect to aquatic pollutants will be proposed after the publication of the 14th Revised Edition of the *UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Model Regulations* this summer.
- c Consumer Chemical Sector Working Group (CCSWG) (Lisa Wardell)
- Five teleconferences, including an introductory session, was conducted over the last year discussing options for the implementation of the GHS and impacts on current requirements: acute toxicity hazard class (all routes); flammable hazard classes; skin corrosion/irritation; serious eye damage/eye irritation; target organ systemic toxicity - single exposure; aspiration hazard; gases under pressure.
 - A face-to-face meeting will be held March 30 & 31, 2005 to discuss preferred options and to develop recommendations/ proposals on the implementation of the GHS for those hazard classes discussed thus far.
 - Health Canada has begun bilateral discussions with the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to discuss issues of mutual interest regarding GHS implementation. The CPSC are at the beginning of the implementation process and want to understand the process being used here in Canada and the status of the Canadian GHS implementation, particularly for consumer chemicals. The CPSC have been invited to observe CCSWG meetings.
 - Recommendations on the implementation of the GHS for those hazard classes discussed thus far are anticipated to be finalized by June 2005.
- d WHMIS Classification Working Group (WCWG) (Abbey Klugerman)
- Section 19 of Hazardous Products Act has requirement for WHMIS officials to consult with stakeholders.
 - the Current Issues Committee (CIC) is the forum for consultation on matters concerning the interpretation or modification of WHMIS; membership includes representatives from industry, labour and WHMIS regulatory agencies.
 - WCWG (a subset of the CIC with the same proportion of stakeholders) has held six teleconferences to discuss the technical aspects of comparison the various hazard classes between the current *Controlled Products Regulations* and the GHS.

- Hazard classes discussed so far are: compressed gases; flammable materials; skin/eye irritants and corrosives; materials that are corrosive to metals; biohazards; tested and untested mixtures; skin sensitizers; acute toxicity (5 routes of exposure).
- CIC met on January 19, 2005 to discuss the preferred options (in form of Agreements Document) of the WCWG. There was agreement with all preferred options except for acute toxicity and skin sensitization, where further discussion is required.
- WCWG will next discuss: oxidizing solids; liquids and gases; respiratory sensitizers; some hazard communication special provisions; self reactive substances; organic peroxides; target organ systemic toxicity.

Action: Health Canada GHS web site to be updated to reflect all the activities.

6 Wrap Up / Next Steps

- Next meeting targetted for September 2005, when sector working groups have recommendations and will be ready to provide updates and topics for GIC discussion.

Appendix

Additional Comments on the WHMIS letter

Yves Brissette
Chargé des relations hors Québec
CSST

En tant que membre du IWCC et du CIC, je suis d'accord avec le document déposé par Santé Canada. Les questions "Product convergence/jurisdiction for the Workplace" et "Coordination of Canadian Approach to GHS Implementation" sont cruciales pour les agences provinciales de réglementation de la SST don't les inspecteurs s'assurent de la conformité.

Translation:

As a member of IWCC and CIC, I agree with the document tabled by Health Canada. The issues "Product convergence/jurisdiction for the Workplace" and "Coordination of Canadian Approach to GHS Implementation" are crucial for the health and safety provincial regulatory agencies, whose inspectors must ensure compliance.

Correction from Abbey Klugerman re: Testing for Physical Hazards

Neither the *Hazardous Products Act* nor the *Controlled Products Regulations* impose a legal requirement to test materials to determine WHMIS classification and this was a fundamental stakeholder agreement reflected in the Report of the original WHMIS Steering Committee. This is posted on the Health Canada web site:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/whmis-simdut/application/classification_e.html