

Society For Risk Analysis Annual Meeting 2010

Risk Analysis in Action

M3-C: Monday, December 6, 2010

Industry Safety and Release Responsibilities

M3-C.3 14:10 The impact of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) on the changing regulatory landscape of hazard communication. *Le MH**,
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Abstract: The regulatory landscape concerning hazard communication started to transform with the implementation of the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) in 2003 and OSHA's 2009 notice of proposed rulemaking to align its current Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) with the provisions of the GHS. The GHS is based on the principle that existing systems around the world should be harmonized in order to develop a single, global system to address chemical, label, and safety data sheet (SDS) classification; including standardized criteria for health, physical, and environmental hazard classification and labeling. While OSHA's proposal to adopt the GHS will not change the scope of the current HCS, the focus of some provisions within the standard will shift from a performance-oriented design to requiring explicit requirements for how components of hazard classification, labels, and material safety data sheets (MSDSs) should be prepared and implemented. This presentation will describe the affected components of the HCS and provide an analysis of the benefits and challenges that will face organizations in conforming to the proposed amendment. Major changes to the labeling component of the HCS will include standardization of labels, symbols, signal words, and hazard statements assigned to each of the three GHS hazard categories (health, physical, and environmental). Changes to MSDS requirements will include a specified order of presentation for a 16-section data sheet covering health, physical and environmental hazard criteria for substances and mixtures. While affected organizations are expected incur costs related to the reclassification of chemicals, revision of labels and MSDSs, and additional training of employees on the new label elements and MSDS format, the amendment is expected to create a dramatic reduction in safety and health risk while increasing productivity in comparison to the current provisions of the HCS.