



Department: _____ Workplace Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Instructor/Supervisor: _____

Canada Topic M116: WHMIS (The Right to Know)

Introduction: The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is based on a simple concept – that employees have both a need and a right to know the hazards and identities of the chemicals they are exposed to when working. They also need to know how to prevent adverse effects from occurring. The WHMIS is designed to provide employees with the information they need to work safely. WHMIS addresses the issues of evaluating and communicating hazards to workers, including Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), a written program, and employee training requirements.



Regulation requires that all employers develop a written WHMIS Program and train their employees. This is a difficult task for most companies since jobs and tasks change frequently. Each company must develop a program to meet the needs of its employees at the job site. A copy of this program must be available on each jobsite for review by any interested employee.

Frequently overlooked items usually covered by WHMIS requirements on a construction site include: adhesives, gasoline, paint thinner, grease, cleaners, solvents, and sealers. MSDSs are usually very easy to obtain. Retail stores (including hardware and home improvement stores) selling hazardous chemicals to employers having a commercial account are required to provide MSDSs upon request.

Containers and Labels: Your company must rely primarily on the use of the manufacturers' container labels to meet the labelling requirement of the standard. All chemicals on site must be stored in their original container with manufacturers' label attached. Workers may dispense chemicals from original containers in small quantities for immediate use by a single employee on a single shift. These secondary containers will be labelled with the generic name of the product dispensed (e.g., paint, thinner, etc.). Excess chemical will be returned to the original container at the end of the shift or given to a supervisor for proper handling and disposal. Supervisors shall ensure that all containers are labelled with the manufacturer's name and address, and appropriate hazard warnings. Unmarked containers of any size will be left in the work area unattended.

Hazardous Chemical List & Material Safety Data Sheets: Each employer must develop a list of all the hazardous chemicals and copies of MSDSs for all hazardous chemicals to which employees may be exposed while on the job site and available to all employees at the job site for review at any time.

Employee Information and Training: Each employer is responsible for providing required hazard communication training and hazard information to their affected employees and to confirm understanding of such training and instructions. Training must be documented. Prior to starting work, each new employee should attend a health and safety orientation and should receive information and training on the following:

- **An overview** of the requirements contained in the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System standard.
- **Methods to reduce or prevent exposure** to any hazardous chemicals including safe work practices and use of personal protective equipment;
- **Location and availability** of the written hazard communication program and the MSDSs for any hazardous chemicals present at the job site;
- **Physical hazards and health effects** of the hazardous chemicals.
- **Methods used to determine** the presence or release of hazardous chemicals in the work area.
- **Steps the company has taken** to reduce or prevent exposure to these chemicals.
- **Safety emergency procedures** to follow in the event of exposure to chemicals.
- **How to read** container labels and interpret MSDSs to obtain appropriate hazard information.



Conclusion: It is each company's responsibility to inform and ensure all employees on the job site exchange the following information: hazardous chemicals list to which employees may be exposed while on the job site; procedures for obtaining MSDSs from each employer; precautions employees should take to reduce the possibility of exposure; location of written hazard communication programs for each company; and, contact information for the safety coordinator for each company. In order for this to be effective, a commitment must be made by all involved persons to the prevention of incidents or happenings that result in injury and/or illness and to comply with all safety rules.

Employee Safety Suggestions and Specific Workplace Hazards: _____

Personnel Safety Violations: _____

Employee Attendance: _____ (personnel who are attending this meeting)

Verification of employee attendance and safety suggestions

EMPLOYEE QUIZ demonstrates your employee's understanding of material

Date: ____/____/____ Time: ____:____ AM/PM **ANSWERS TO EMPLOYEE QUIZ: 1) C, 2) B, 3) D, 4) A, 5) C**

YOUR COMPANY NAME AND SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE LINE (CUSTOMIZED FOR YOU)

These guidelines do not supercede local, provincial, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OHS regulations.