



TITLE

WORKPLACE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION SYSTEM (WHMIS)

SCOPE

Provincial

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People Executive Committee

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SPONSOR

Workplace Health and Safety

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Workplace Health and Safety Policy (#1121)

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NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that all **AHS workers** are trained in the identification, use, storage, handling, and disposal of **hazardous products** in accordance with Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. AHS Worker Responsibilities

1.1 All AHS workers are responsible for:

- ensuring a thorough understanding of this Guideline;
- safely identifying, using, storing, handling, and disposing of hazardous products;
- knowing the hazards of the hazardous products used or in their proximity and others working in the area;
- reviewing and understanding their department's Hazard Identification Assessment and Control (HIAC);

- e) complying with controls (elimination, substitution, engineered, administrative, and personal protective equipment) identified in their department's HIAC documents and other documents identifying controls;
- f) completing the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training available on MyLearningLink;
- g) knowing the location of spill response materials and the appropriate spill response measures (Code Brown) in the event of a uncontrolled release; and
- h) reporting all workplace incidents involving hazardous products to their **manager/supervisor** and in MySafetyNet.

2. Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities

2.1 All managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- a) ensuring AHS workers remain compliant with this Guideline, best practices, and legislation;
- b) verifying that **workers** in their area of responsibility complete the required WHMIS training;
- c) monitoring AHS workers to ensure that recommended controls are being utilized;
- d) ensuring AHS workers report incidents involving hazardous products in MySafetyNet;
- e) working collaboratively with AHS workers to complete incident and hazard investigations by ensuring the appropriate root causes have been identified and corrective actions have been implemented and communicated;
- f) assigning a **WHMIS Designate** for their area of responsibility if appropriate. If assistance is needed in determining if a WHMIS designate is required for your department or area, contact your Workplace Health and Safety Business Partner (WHSBP) Advisor;
- g) assisting the WHMIS Designate in developing and maintaining an up-to-date inventory of hazardous products in their department;
- h) completing the WHMIS Designate training if not assigning a WHMIS Designate to their area of responsibility, if appropriate; and
- i) maintaining and updating worker training records.

3. Workplace Health & Safety Responsibilities

- 3.1 WHSBP is responsible for:
- a) providing support related to WHMIS, as required;
 - b) providing WHMIS Designate training, as required;
 - c) ensuring the assigned WHMIS Designate is **competent** and aware of their role and responsibilities;
 - d) assisting when auditing for compliance; and
 - e) assisting in assessing and notifying workers of WHMIS training requirements.
- 3.2 The Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Standards & Innovation Team is responsible for developing and maintaining online WHMIS training, WHMIS Designate training, WHMIS *Awareness Briefing*, and the WHMIS *Program Requirement Checklist*.

4. WHMIS Designates Responsibilities

- 4.1 WHMIS Designates are champions in the unit or department that have additional training and awareness in the application of WHMIS principles. Any AHS worker that completes the training and has the flexibility in their current role to take on this additional responsibility to keep workers safe would make a good candidate.
- 4.2 WHMIS Designates are responsible for:
- a) assisting the manager/supervisor in implementing and maintaining their department's WHMIS program;
 - b) maintaining an up-to-date department inventory of hazardous products in their department;
 - c) attending WHMIS Designate training;
 - d) providing support for WHMIS training in the department;
 - e) assisting the manager/supervisor in orientating new workers to the hazardous products in their department;
 - f) acting as a contact person for WHS on WHMIS issues as required; and
 - g) being familiar with the 3E **Safety Data Sheet** (SDS) system.

5. WHMIS

- 5.1 The purpose of WHMIS is to reduce the incidence of worker illness and injury resulting from the use of hazardous products in the workplace.

- 5.2 The *Occupational Health and Safety Code* (Alberta) requires that training is available that provides information about supplier and work site labels, SDS, and information of significance to worker health and safety.
- 5.3 WHMIS is comprised of:
- a) **supplier labels** and **work site labels**;
 - b) Safety Data Sheets (SDS); and
 - c) worker education and training.

6. Supplier and Work Site Labels

- 6.1 All hazardous products shall be labelled with a supplier label or work site label. Labels shall not be removed, defaced, modified, or altered if any amount of the hazardous product remains in the container unless new information is received by the supplier.
- 6.2 Illegible or missing labels shall be replaced immediately with a work site label. In the interim, the product shall be removed from use and it is the responsibility of the person handling the product to replace the label.
- 6.3 When a hazardous product is decanted or diluted, a work site label shall be applied to the new container.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the AHS worker decanting or manufacturing the hazardous product to create work site labels.
- 6.5 Monitoring for compliance of WHMIS labelling is a shared responsibility of everyone involved.
- 6.6 A label shall be created for any hazardous product being produced or manufactured at the worksite. It is the responsibility of the department that produced the product to ensure it has an appropriate label.

7. Safety Data Sheets

- 7.1 The supplier is responsible for providing AHS with an SDS for any hazardous products they acquire unless the supplier is exempt from the requirement to provide the SDS under the *Hazardous Products Regulations* (Canada).
- 7.2 A SDS shall be created for any hazardous product being produced or manufactured at the workplace.
- 7.3 A current SDS shall be **readily available** for all hazardous products being stored, handled, used, and disposed of by AHS workers. SDS shall be updated when new information about the hazardous product becomes available from the supplier.

- 7.4 Electronic methods for accessing SDS are acceptable, provided:
- a) the system is available to all AHS workers during all shifts;
 - b) a trained user is available, or all workers are trained on the system; and
 - c) the electronic system can produce paper copies of the SDS.

8. WHMIS Worker Education and Training

- 8.1 All AHS workers who work with or in proximity to hazardous products shall have WHMIS education and department-specific WHMIS training. This includes:
- a) WHMIS education on MyLearningLink (or alternate courses approved by WHS) which shall be reviewed every three (3) years, or more frequently when deemed necessary by the manager/supervisor to ensure worker competence; and
 - b) department-specific training on the *WHMIS Awareness Briefing*, which shall be reviewed yearly. It is the responsibility of the department manager/supervisor and WHMIS Designate to ensure specific content is included.
- 8.2 WHMIS Designate training includes WHMIS program basics and concepts, which are applicable throughout AHS, and shall be completed every two (2) years or when deemed necessary by their manager/supervisor to ensure worker competence.

9. Program Review and Evaluation

- 9.1 Each department manager/supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the *WHMIS Program Requirement Checklist* is completed annually.
- 9.2 Recommended actions shall be developed for all deficiencies identified on the *WHMIS Program Requirement Checklist*. Deficiencies shall be documented on the *Corrective Action Log*.
- 9.3 Recommended and corrective actions shall be managed according to the *Corrective Action Process*.
- 9.4 AHS shall conduct a review and assessment of the WHMIS program every three (3) years.

10. Records Retention

- 10.1 Information pertaining to WHMIS shall be maintained in accordance with the *Records Management Policy*, associated procedures, and the *Records Retention Schedule*.

- 10.2 Managers/supervisors are responsible for the management of all worker training records.
- 10.3 Records of training are available to workers upon request from their manager/supervisor.

DEFINITIONS

AHS worker means AHS employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, and volunteers, but excludes contracted service providers.

Competent means a person is adequately qualified, suitably trained, and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimum degree of supervision.

Hazardous products means any product that meets the criteria for one (1) or more of the ten (10) WHMIS hazard classifications.

Manager means the individual(s) who has the delegated human resource authority for directly planning, monitoring, and supervising direct reports.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) means documents which provide general information regarding a particular product. SDS identify minimum required criteria to assist a worker in the safe handling of a hazardous product.

Readily available means located near workers in a hard copy or electronic version, accessible to all workers during on all shifts.

Supervisor means a person, whether unionized or non-unionized, who has charge of a work site or authority over an AHS worker.

Supplier label means a label which is provided by the supplier and is recognized by its pictogram and danger word.

WHMIS Designate(s) means a manager-appointed AHS worker(s) whose role/function is to assist the manager with the department's WHMIS program.

Work site label means a label which provides a product identifier, information for safe handling, and reference to the SDS.

Worker means AHS employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and workers of contracted service providers.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
 - *Records Management Policy (#1133)*
 - *Workplace Health and Safety Policy (#1121)*
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
 - *Corrective Action Log*

- *Hazard Identification Assessment and Control Process*
- *Records Retention Schedule*
- *WHMIS Awareness Briefing*
- *WHMIS Program Requirement Checklist*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Management System*
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
 - *Hazardous Product Act (Canada)*
 - *Hazardous Product Regulation (Canada)*
 - *Occupational Health and Safety Act (Alberta)*
 - *Occupational Health and Safety Code (Alberta)*
 - *WHMIS (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety)*

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