



SAFETY NOTICE



Safety Notice Number: **0000013**

Issued July 22, 2024 by Occupational Health and Safety Division, Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration

Updated Workplace Hazardous Materials information (WHMIS) Rules

Summary

Effective June 18, 2024, Nova Scotia's Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) rules have been updated. The updated WHMIS rules are now included as Part 3 of the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations* under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The former *WHMIS Regulations* have been repealed.

First introduced in 1988, Nova Scotia's WHMIS rules are part of an interlocking national system that protects the health and safety of employees who work with or who are at risk of exposure to hazardous products in the workplace.

- The federal *Hazardous Products Act* governs classification, labelling and information requirements for hazardous products that are supplied and sold to workplaces in Canada.
- Provinces regulate the way this hazard information is used within workplaces, including requirements for providing WHMIS education and training to workers.

Nova Scotia's updated regulations now reflect changes that were made to the federal *Hazardous Products Act* and regulations, including Canada's 2015 adoption of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

The updated regulations include changes to some terms, definitions and references. All other provinces have made similar changes to their regulations in order to keep WHMIS requirements consistent across Canada.

New definitions clarify an important distinction between general WHMIS education and workplace-specific training. Both are required. "Education" refers to the delivery of general information about labels and safety data sheets and the purpose and significance of the information they contain. "Training" refers to the delivery of workplace- and job-specific information to employees.



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The former *WHMIS Regulations* only referred to “employers” and “employees” – they did not explicitly refer to self-employed persons. As part of the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations*, the updated WHMIS rules will also apply to self-employed persons who work with or who are at risk of exposure to hazardous products.

- This means that self-employed persons who work with hazardous products will need to comply with requirements for WHMIS education and training, and with requirements governing use of labels and safety data sheets in the workplace.
- Safety Branch provides a free on-line WHMIS course offered through SkillsOnlineNS. It is approximately one hour in duration. We will continue to offer this course as we work to update the training program during the transition period. The course introduces the overall purpose and key elements of WHMIS and provides an easy way for self-employed persons (or others not already familiar with WHMIS) to satisfy the general education requirement.

For access to the WHMIS course, please visit:

<https://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety/courses.asp>

- For the WHMIS Training Guide, see:
<https://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety/docs/whmis-training-guide.pdf>

The updated regulations provide a general 6-month transition period. Workplaces that would be in compliance with the former *WHMIS Regulations* will be deemed compliant with the updated regulations until December 18, 2024, and self-employed persons will not be required to comply with the updated regulations before that date.

A conditional 3-year transition period is provided for employers such as laboratory operators who may wish to continue using stocks of older products that are labelled in compliance with older (pre-2015) federal labelling requirements.

For the updated regulations, see:

https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsworkplace.htm#TOC1_3

Contact for bulletin queries

Safety Branch

Labour, Skills and Immigration

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