

It's No Accident



These symbols are part of the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

Hazardous chemicals in your workplace

Just about all workplaces have hazardous chemicals used and stored somewhere. They might be drums of solvents or bleach floor cleaner.

Whatever's in your workplace, know that exposure to these kinds of chemicals is entirely preventable.

What are hazardous chemicals?

Hazardous chemicals are substances that can cause adverse health effects. If exposed, people can experience poisoning, breathing problems, skin rashes, allergic reactions and sensitisation, and even cancer, to name a few.

Some health effects happen immediately after exposure, like poisoning and burns, while others are long-term health conditions, like nerve or lung damage.

Some hazardous chemicals can also create physical hazards, such as fires, explosions and corrosion.

Most substances, mixtures and articles that are classified as dangerous goods under the Australian Code for the

Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail (ADG Code) are hazardous chemicals.

The info you need

Manufacturers and suppliers must provide your employer/PCBU with a safety data sheet (SDS) for hazardous chemicals. There must also be package markings and hazard class information to help identify what's in a product, precautions for use, and safe storage and handling requirements.

Australia has adopted the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). This is an internationally agreed system for classifying and labelling hazardous chemicals.

Any hazardous chemicals manufactured or imported on or after 1 January 2023 must be properly labelled and have an SDS prepared in accordance with GHS 7.

Your employer has responsibilities

Employers/PCBUs have duties when it comes to hazardous chemicals.

They must ensure:

- correct labelling using warning placards and displaying of safety signs.
- a register and manifest of hazardous chemicals are maintained and notify the regulator of quantities (where required under regulation).
- the risks of reactions are identified as well as the stability of hazardous chemicals.
- exposure standards are not exceeded and atmospheric levels are as low as possible.
- health monitoring for workers.
- information, training, instruction and supervision for workers.
- there are spill containment systems for hazardous chemicals.
- the current SDS is readily available to workers.
- ignition sources and flammable and combustible substances are controlled.
- fire protection, and firefighting, emergency and safety equipment is available. →

**It's No Accident is
the WHS newsletter
of the AMWU.**

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**When you see any GHS symbols, it's important
that you read the label and safety data sheet
and follow the instructions.**

(Continued from front)

Emergency procedures

Emergency procedures will depend
on the size and complexity of your
workplace and the types and quantities
of hazardous chemicals and the
processes involved when the goods
are in use.

At a minimum, emergency procedures
should include instructions on:

- how to raise the alarm, including how
to contact emergency services.
- any actions workers should take to
ensure everyone's safety and health.
- any actions prescribed persons, such
as fire wardens, should take.

To be effective, workers need to
be appropriately trained and any
procedures need to be tested.

Workers must also be consulted
and, ideally, directly involved in
the development of emergency
procedures.

Emergency equipment

Examples of emergency equipment
that may be required in your workplace:

- over packs, such as oversized
drums or bunding, for containing
leaking containers
- absorbent material suitable for a
chemical spill

- booms, plates and flexible sheeting
to prevent spillage from entering
drains and waterways
- fire extinguishers
- neutralising agents such as lime
and soda ash
- pumps and hoses for removing
spilled material
- first aid kits (including antidotes
for specific chemical exposures
e.g. cyanide)
- emergency showers and eye
wash stations
- hand tools such as mops, buckets,
squeegees and bins
- protective clothing and equipment for
people involved in the clean-up.

This equipment must be suitable and
should be checked regularly for expiry
dates, located close to the point of
chemical use, accessible and clearly
sign posted.

For more information, refer to Safe Work
Australia's Code of Practice.



bit.ly_SWAHCCOP










Look out for these labels on hazardous chemicals

When you see any of these symbols, it's important that you read the label and safety data sheet and follow the instructions.



The symbols are part of the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).



PHYSICAL HAZARDS				HEALTH HAZARDS			ENVIRO HAZARDS	
								
EXPLOSIVE	FLAMMABLE	OXIDISING	GASES UNDER PRESSURE	CORROSIVE	ACUTE TOXICITY (HARMFUL)	ACUTE TOXICITY (SEVERE)	CHRONIC HEALTH HAZARD	ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD