



New California PELs to better protect workers from hazardous chemicals

US Department of Labor's OSHA revises Hazard Communication Standard

## Spring Newsletter

### New California PELs to better protect workers from hazardous chemicals

To better protect workers who may be exposed to chemical contaminants, the California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board has adopted lower permissible exposure limits (PELs) for carbon disulfide, hydrogen fluoride, sulfuric acid, and toluene.

California's OSHSB adopted the new PELs on January 19, and the changes went into effect on March 17. More information about exposure limits is available in the California Department of Industrial Relations' [PEL and STEL table](#).

- Federal OSHA [QuickTakes](#)  
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### US Department of Labor's OSHA revises Hazard Communication Standard

*Regulation protects workers from dangerous chemicals, helps American businesses compete worldwide*

**WASHINGTON** – To better protect workers from hazardous chemicals, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has revised its Hazard Communication Standard, aligning it with the United Nations' global chemical labeling system. The new standard, once implemented, will prevent an estimated 43 deaths and result in an estimated \$475.2 million in enhanced productivity for U.S. businesses each year.

"Exposure to hazardous chemicals is one of the most serious dangers facing American workers today," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "Revising OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard will improve the quality, consistency and clarity of hazard information that workers receive, making it safer for workers to do their jobs and easier for employers to stay competitive in the global marketplace."

The Hazard Communication Standard, being revised to align with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals, will be fully implemented in 2016 and benefit workers by reducing confusion about chemical hazards in the workplace, facilitating safety training and improving understanding of hazards, especially for low literacy workers. OSHA's standard will classify chemicals according to their health and physical hazards, and establish consistent labels and safety data sheets for all chemicals made in the United States and imported from abroad.

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The revised standard also is expected to prevent an estimated 585 injuries and illnesses annually. It will reduce trade barriers and result in estimated annualized benefits in productivity improvements for American businesses that regularly handle, store and use hazardous chemicals, as well as cost savings of \$32.2 million for American businesses that periodically update safety data sheets and labels for chemicals covered under the standard.

"OSHA's 1983 Hazard Communication Standard gave workers the right to know. As one participant expressed during our rulemaking process, this update will give them the right to understand, as well," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels.

During the transition period to the effective completion dates noted in the standard, chemical manufacturers, importers, distributors and employers may comply with either 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910.1200 (the final standard), the current standard or both.

The final rule revising the standard is available at <http://s.dol.gov/P1>\*.

Further information for workers, employers and downstream users of hazardous chemicals can be reviewed at OSHA's Hazard Communication Safety and Health topics at <http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/index.html>, which includes links to OSHA's revised Hazard Communication Standard and guidance materials such as Q and A's, OSHA fact sheet and Quick Cards.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

**-U.S. Department of Labor, News Release, March 20, 2012**