

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized
System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

4 December 2012

Twenty-fourth session

Geneva, 12 – 14 December 2012

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda

Implementation of the GHS:

Reports on the status of implementation

Implementation of the GHS in Canada

Transmitted by the expert from Canada

Introduction

1. On December 7, 2011, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Canada, Steven Harper, and the President of the United States (US), Barack Obama, announced the Joint Action Plan for Canada-US Regulatory Cooperation Council and made a commitment to align and synchronize implementation of common classification and labelling requirements for workplace hazardous chemicals. This announcement has committed Canada to the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals for workplace chemicals in Canada by June 1, 2015.

2. In order to align with the US, Canada is hoping to table amendments to the *Hazardous Products Act* (HPA) by Spring 2013. The HPA regulates the provision of labels and SDSs upon sale or import of hazardous products. The amendment of the legislation will provide Health Canada with the authorities needed to implement the GHS, including making changes to definitions within the Act. Further, changes to the *Controlled Products Regulations* (CPR), which set out classification criteria as well as label and SDS elements, will also be ready for publication and consultation at approximately the same time. These changes would then result in changes to occupational safety and health legislation in the responsible federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

3. As mentioned above, implementation of the GHS in Canada will require legislative and regulatory changes at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels. The provincial and territorial governments will need sufficient time to make amendments to their occupational safety and health legislation, which will be determined by changes to the HPA and the CPR. Industry stakeholders have indicated that a minimum of one year is needed to implement the new the GHS requirements and it is recognized that employers need sufficient time to complete the workplace training.

4. With these steps in mind, Canada is working towards ensuring that changes to the HPA and its regulations, as well as other affected pieces of legislation are finalized by Spring 2014 in order to allow the occupational safety and health agencies enough time to make amendments to their corresponding legislation by June 2015.