

OPPSD HMIS® Position Statement

On March 26, 2012, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) revised its existing Hazard Communication Standard to align with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).^{1,2} The result is the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard 2012 (HazCom 2012).³ HazCom 2012 is designed, in part, to improve the quality and consistency of hazard information in the workplace, to reduce confusion about chemical hazards, and to harmonize U.S. hazard communication rules with those used internationally. It identifies the degree of hazard using categories ranging from 4 (less serious hazard) to 1 (most serious hazard). Since June 1, 2015, these new hazard categories are required to be displayed on SDSs and labels.

Previously, the OPPSD and its members used the Hazardous Materials Information System (HMIS®), a voluntary hazard rating system developed by the American Coatings Association (ACA).⁴ HMIS® has five different hazard categories, ranging from 0 (less serious hazard) to 4 (most serious hazard). In other words, the HMIS® rating system is the exact opposite of the new HazCom 2012 rating system. In addition, HMIS® does not provide sufficient guidance for the assignment of flammability hazard ratings within “HMIS® Implementation Manual, Fourth Edition”, which can result in inconsistent and therefore confusing communication.

OPPSD is concerned that workers may be confused if both HazCom 2012 and HMIS® ratings are used simultaneously. Because confusion over chemical hazards could lead to serious injury or death, OPPSD has decided to discontinue its publication of HMIS® ratings on the OPPSD website, and withdraw the previously published list. This change will be fully implemented by July 1, 2018. Individual manufacturers will make their own decisions as to their continued use of HMIS®.

For additional information on the safe handling and storage of organic peroxides, please contact the manufacturer, or visit the OPPSD website plasticsindustry.org/oppsd.

¹ <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3636.pdf>

² <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/hazcom-faq.html>

³ <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/>

⁴ <https://www.paint.org/advocacy/occupational-health-and-safety/hmis/>