

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). The result is the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard 2012 (HazCom 2012). 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.

HazCom 2012 uses hazard categories ranging from 5 (less serious hazard) to 1 (most serious hazard) to identify the degree of hazard. By June 1, 2015, these new hazard categories must be displayed on SDSs and labels.

Previously, DuPont used the Hazardous Materials Information System (HMIS), a voluntary hazard rating system developed by the National Paint and Coatings Association (NPCA), now the American Coatings Association (ACA). HMIS has four 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.

OSHA specifies that, after the implementation of HazCom 2012, employers may continue to use the HMIS ratings, as long as the information provided to employees is consistent with Hazcom 2012 and employees must have immediate access to specific hazard information. Nevertheless, the DuPont Product Stewardship and Regulatory Affairs (PS&R) organization is concerned that workers may be confused by the two opposing systems if both HazCom 2012 and HMIS ratings are used simultaneously. Because confusion over chemical hazards could lead to serious injury or death,

DuPont has decided to discontinue its use of the HMIS ratings on all SDSs and labels. This change will be fully implemented by June 1, 2015. During the transition period, DuPont will progressively phase out SDSs and labels that display HMIS ratings, replacing them with HazCom 2012 compliant SDSs and labels.