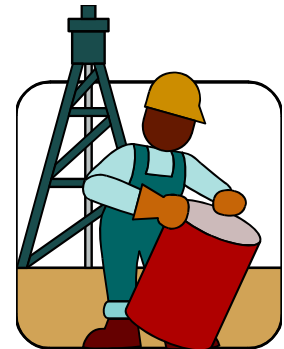


# Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin



## Supplier Material Safety Data Sheets at Oil and Gas Lease Sites

Many of the products used at oil and gas lease sites may be hazardous to workers' health and safety. If these products are classified as "controlled products" under the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), there is a legal requirement for employers to have specific information available at the work site. This information must be provided by the product supplier. As well, the information must be correct and properly represent the hazards of the product. For example, a fire involving a mud tank at an oil and gas lease occurred with a fluid that had a flash point less than  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . According to the fluid's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), the flash point was suppose to be  $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Laboratory testing verified that the product supplied to the site had properties different from those listed in the MSDS.



### What is WHMIS?

WHMIS is a hazard communication system for controlled products used at Canadian worksites. WHMIS was designed to ensure that workers and employers are provided with specific hazard information to help them work more safely with controlled products. Controlled products are products that fall into one or more of the hazard classes specified in the *Hazardous Products Act* (HPA).



The federal HPA requires suppliers of controlled products to provide labels and accurate, up-to-date MSDSs as a condition of sale and importation. The federal *Controlled Products Regulation* (CPR) specifies the form and content of supplier labels, the type and arrangement of information presented in MSDSs, conditions of exemption and details of the criteria that define a controlled product.

WHMIS requirements for worksites in Alberta are in Part 29 of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code. These requirements cover worker education and the type of hazard information that is required at the workplace. For controlled products produced for use at a worksite, the employer must obtain an MSDS that complies with the requirements in the HPA and CPR, unless the employer can show they are exempt from the MSDS requirements in the federal legislation. An example of this would be a product, such as a pesticide or drug, that is covered by other federal legislation.

## MSDSs at oil and gas leases sites

Alberta Employment and Immigration, Workplace Health and Safety has conducted inspections at oil and gas lease sites. Inspections involving compliance with WHMIS have revealed:

- outdated MSDSs;
- MSDSs for controlled products not being present at the lease site;
- shipments of product being received without the required supplier labels or MSDSs; and
- MSDSs that do not contain the required information.

Because of their importance in assuring the health and safety of lease site workers, employers must:

- (1) ensure that MSDSs are up-to-date. MSDSs must be updated by the product supplier or employer (in some cases the lease site owner is the supplier) whenever new information becomes available, or every 3 years, whichever comes first;
- (2) verify that MSDSs are readily available to all workers at all times. The employer is responsible for having MSDSs on site for each controlled product that workers may be exposed to;
- (3) verify that products received at the lease site without a supplier label, an up-to-date MSDS, or other acceptable documentation are not used until the information is received from the supplier.


- The supplier is responsible for providing this information; and
- (4) ensure that products supplied to the lease site have the same properties as those specified in the supplier labels or MSDSs.


Drilling and servicing fluids are often complex mixtures. Their components can vary from field to field and even within the same field. The supplier of the fluids must determine whether they fall into one or more of the six WHMIS classes for controlled products and provide an appropriate WHMIS label and MSDS, as required.

Employers found violating the WHMIS laws are subject to various legal actions. Violation of the WHMIS laws may result in orders to make changes, shut down work site operations, or prosecution. Prosecution under the federal laws may lead to a fine of up to \$1,000,000.00 and/or imprisonment for up to 2 years. Provincially, prosecution for violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* or its regulations may result in fines of up to \$1,000,000.00 and/or imprisonment for up to 12 months.

## For more information

Additional information regarding WHMIS can be found in the following Workplace Health and Safety publications, available through the Internet or at the offices listed below:

 [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_ch007.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_ch007.pdf)  
WHMIS Information for Workers – CH007

 [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_ch008.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_ch008.pdf)  
WHMIS Information for Employers – CH008

Other publications that may be helpful include:

 [www.worksafebc.com/publications/health\\_and\\_safety/whmis/pub\\_40-20\\_20\\_20\\_20.asp](http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/whmis/pub_40-20_20_20_20.asp)  
WHMIS Core Material


 [www.worksafebc.com/publications/health\\_and\\_safety/whmis/pub\\_40-20\\_20\\_20\\_30.asp](http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/whmis/pub_40-20_20_20_30.asp)  
Suppliers' Guide to WHMIS

## Contact us:

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### Province-Wide Contact Centre

 Edmonton & surrounding  
area:  
(780) 415-8690

 Throughout Alberta:  
1-866-415-8690



Deaf or hearing impaired

- In Edmonton: **(780) 427-9999**

or

- **1-800-232-7215**  
throughout Alberta

### Web Site



[www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

## Getting copies of OHS Act, Regulation & Code:

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### Queen's Printer



[www.qp.gov.ab.ca](http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca)



Edmonton (780) 427-4952

### Workplace Health and Safety



<http://industry.alberta.ca/whs-ohs>

Call any Government of Alberta office toll-free  
Dial 310-0000, then the area code and telephone number you want to reach

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