

Communicating Chemical Hazards at Work

Information Sheet



May 2018

When a chemical is delivered to a workplace, the hazard information is usually visible on the supply (CLPⁱ) or transport (ADRⁱⁱ) label or for deliveries in tanks, it is provided via a REACHⁱⁱⁱ Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

When a chemical is decanted from its original container within a workplace, and the risk cannot be removed or controlled, then there may be a need for a warning sign or in-house label. However, such warning signs or labels cannot substitute other methods of control, for example, engineering controls.



The rules that govern warning signs and in-house labels in a workplace, for example, for decanted chemicals or those formulated for internal use only, come under the scope of the

Chemical Agents Regulations^{iv} and the Safety Signs at Places of Work Regulations^v. Such chemicals do not come under the scope of CLP or ADR as they are not placed on the market. Instead, a risk assessment is used to determine the potential hazards from any chemical produced, stored, transported and used within the workplace, which may result in a requirement to produce an in-house hazard label or display a warning sign.

In practice, this means taking the following steps:

- ✓ **determine** what the hazards are using the supplier label/SDS and if diluted, the CLP criteria;
- ✓ **complete** a chemical agents risk assessment considering the activity, type of chemical, other chemicals in use, the frequency of use, the nature of the work, the likelihood of an accident;
- ✓ **decide**, based on the results of the risk assessment, if a label/warning sign is required; and
- ✓ **apply** a label/warning sign, if required, using the safety signs at places of work guidance.^{vi}



Using warning signs or labels on containers and pipes

Containers, tanks and vessels used for hazardous chemicals at work, along with the visible pipes containing or transporting such chemicals, should be labelled with the relevant CLP pictograms^{vii} from Annex V of the CLP Regulation. The warning signs or labels should include supplementary information, including the chemical name and associated hazards. They should be mounted on the side of the container/tank/pipe, be visible and durable. It is important not to use too many warning signs or labels, so as to avoid confusion.

Warning signs/labels are not required when the containers are used for brief periods or for those whose contents change frequently, such as chemical process vessels and pipes, provided that alternative adequate measures are taken.

A general rule is *'if you leave it, label it'*, for example, leaving a decanted chemical overnight.

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The CLP pictograms may be replaced with the yellow triangle warning signs listed in Part B of Schedule 9 of the Safety Signs in Places of Work Regulations, or a red diamond transport label, using the same symbol or pictogram. However, where there is no equivalent warning sign, then the CLP pictogram must be used. (See Figure 1).



Figure 1:

CLP pictogram only	Choice of pictograms or symbols
 <p>Shall use CLP pictogram GHS08 as no equivalent warning sign or transport label.</p>	 <p>OR</p>  <p>OR</p>  <p>May use CLP pictogram (GHS02) or flammable material warning sign or transport label (use only one)</p>

Using warning signs or labels to mark areas, rooms and enclosures

Any areas, rooms or enclosures used for the storage of significant quantities of hazardous chemicals shall be indicated with a suitable warning sign or label, unless the warning or labels on the individual containers are clearly visible from the outside. Stores of a number of different hazardous chemicals may be indicated with the general danger warning sign. The signs or labels must be positioned near the storage area or on the door leading to the storage room.



Please note that the yellow triangle general danger warning sign, as illustrated across, can only be used for stores of chemicals and cannot be used to identify individual chemicals assigned the CLP pictogram, as illustrated, (GHS 07) within a workplace.



- i The Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008
- ii European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road
- iii REACH Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006; Annex II on SDSs
- iv Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations 2001 and 2015
- v Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 to 2016; Chapter 1 of Part 7: Safety Signs at Places of Work
- vi http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/General_Application_Regulations/Safety_Signs_at_Places_of_Work.pdf
- vii <http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/pictograms.html>

Further Information and Guidance:

Visit our website at www.hsa.ie, telephone our contact centre on **1890 289 389** or email wcu@hsa.ie

Use BeSMART, our free online risk assessment tool at www.besmart.ie

Check out our range of free online courses at www.hsalearning.ie

