

An introduction to the CLP Regulation for professional suppliers/users

Do you sell or use chemicals?

If so, you may have heard about a new European Regulation which will change how chemicals are *classified, labelled and packaged*. This guidance offers an introduction to these changes to help you understand what you will need to do.

In this guide 'chemical' means a single substance (such as acetone) or a mixture (such as a paint or ink).

What is the CLP Regulation?

The CLP Regulation is the new EC Regulation No 1272/2008 on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of substances and mixtures. The legislation introduces throughout the EU a new system for classifying and labelling chemicals, based on the United Nations' Globally Harmonised System or 'GHS'.

Current situation – "old" legislation

Some chemicals have hazardous properties which can become a danger if they are not handled properly. They can be for example explosive, toxic, irritant, flammable or hazardous to the environment.

In order to protect consumers, workers and the environment the law requires people who sell (or 'supply') chemicals to find out how these chemicals can cause harm to health and/or the environment and to label them accordingly. It says that suppliers must use certain symbols and warning phrases on the label to inform users about the hazards of chemicals

These symbols and phrases are part of the existing system for protecting the users of chemicals based on the Dangerous Substances Directive (DSD - 67/548/EEC) and Dangerous Preparations Directive (DPD – 1999/45/EC). The system has been in place for over 40 years and has worked well to help protect people and the environment.

For example:

	Example of Hazard	Example of Statement
	Explosive	Risk of explosion by shock, friction, fire or other sources of ignition
	Oxidising	Contact with combustible material may cause fire
	Flammable	Highly flammable
	Toxic	Harmful in contact with skin
	Irritant	May cause sensitization by skin contact
	Corrosive	Causes burns
	Dangerous for the environment	Very toxic to aquatic organisms, may cause long-term adverse effects in the aquatic environment

So why are we changing?

Across the world, countries have different rules on classification and labelling. For example, a chemical could be classified as 'toxic' or 'explosive' in one country but not in another. Different symbols are also used to indicate the same hazards.

Countries in the United Nations, including European Union member states, have been working together with industry representatives and other stakeholders to agree on a classification and labelling system that can be used worldwide. The outcome is the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, known as the *GHS*. The GHS provides a single system to identify hazards and to communicate them in transporting and supplying chemicals across the world.

When are we changing?

The CLP Regulation entered into force on **20 January 2009**. In order to give industry and users the time to adapt to this new system suppliers will be able to continue applying the 'old' legislation over a transitional period.

Substances must be classified, labelled and packaged according to CLP on 1 December 2010, though substances already on the shelves on that date can continue to be supplied until 1 December 2012. The corresponding dates for mixtures are **1 June 2015** and 1 June 2017.

What are the changes?

Users will start to see new pictograms, hazard and precautionary statements, and signal words on chemical labels as suppliers switch to the GHS system.

Although many of the GHS pictograms are similar to the existing EU system, they have been re-designed and given a new shape and colour.

CLP Regulation No 1272/2008	Example of hazard statement	Example of precautionary statement
	Heating may cause an explosion	Keep away from heat/sparks/open flames/hot surfaces. – no smoking
	Heating may cause a fire	Keep only in original container
	May intensify fire; oxidizer	Take any precaution to avoid mixing with combustibles
	Causes serious eye damage	Wear eye protection
	Toxic if swallowed	Do not eat, drink or smoke when using this product
	Toxic to the aquatic life with long lasting effects	Avoid release to the environment
	May cause allergy or asthma symptoms or breathing difficulties if inhaled	In case of inadequate ventilation wear respiratory protection
	May cause an allergic skin reaction	Contaminated work clothing should not be allowed out of the workplace
	Contains gas under pressure; may explode when heated	Protect from sunlight. Store in a well ventilated place

Signal words

The CLP Regulation introduces two new signal words: 'Danger' and 'Warning'.

If the chemical has a more severe hazard, the label includes the signal word 'Danger'; in case of less severe hazards, the signal word is 'Warning'.

Packaging

Both the existing system and the new CLP Regulation require that the packaging used for a chemical must:

- prevent the chemical from escaping
- not be adversely affected by the chemical
- be strong enough to withstand normal handling

Also, if the package has a replaceable closure this must continue to prevent the chemical from escaping even after repeated use.

In addition, some chemicals that are sold to the general public must be in packages fitted with child-resistant fastenings.

Similarly, some chemicals must have a tactile danger warning (normally a small raised triangle) to alert the blind and the partially sighted that they are handling a dangerous chemical.

Both child-resistant fastenings and tactile warning devices must meet certain standards.

Safety Data Sheets

If you are supplying a chemical for professional or industrial use, you must provide a safety data sheet (SDS). A SDS has to include the classification and labelling of the chemical together with other safety information. It is not necessary to supply a SDS to a member of the public who buys a chemical and does not intend to use it for professional or industrial purposes.

SDS are governed by the REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) Regulation 1907/2006, not the CLP Regulation.

If you use chemicals in your work, you may begin to see these changes in the SDS as well as on the labels.

What do these changes mean for you?

If you *supply* a chemical, you should:

- Make sure you understand what your duties are under the new CLP Regulation. You will have duties if you: import, manufacture, formulate, mix, distribute, or sell chemicals.
- Make sure you understand the transitional periods to ensure that you re-classify, label and package on time.
- Co-operate with others in your supply chain, to make sure the changes are managed smoothly.
- Check that your chemicals are correctly classified and that your product labels are accurate.

If you *use* chemicals, you should:

- Look out for the changes and check that you are doing what is needed to use the chemical safely. If you are an employer, alert your employees to these changes too.
- Speak to your chemical suppliers if you have any questions or if you don't understand the changes that have been made.
- If you are an employer, provide your employees with adequate information, instruction and training.
- Follow the advice provided on the new labels and, where appropriate, in Safety Data Sheets.

Further advice and information

Each Member State in the European Union has a national helpdesk. Details can be found at: http://echa.europa.eu/help/nationalhelp_en.asp

The European Commission websites:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/ghs/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/ghs/index_en.htm

The ECHA site: http://echa.europa.eu/classification/clp_guidance_en.asp

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