

Colors restricted to avoid confusion

SYMBOLS - COLOR

Section 22 of the Controlled Products Regulations requires that Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System symbols must be in a color that is not likely to create confusion with safety marks specified in the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations.

The following general rules, says Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, will prevent the use of color combinations for WHMIS symbols that would create confusion with labels under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations. "Where the Controlled Products Regulations require the use of a hazard symbol with a pictogram which is found in the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations:

- the WHMIS symbol may be displayed in the same color combination as required by the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations for the product;
- the WHMIS symbol may be displayed in a color combination other than any of the color combinations required under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations for that pictogram.
- the WHMIS symbol must not be displayed in a color combination that is possible under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations for that pictogram but not required for that product.

The following table summarizes specific rules for each of the symbols that may be required under WHMIS:

WHMIS Class Hazard Symbol Restrictions

WHMIS Class	Hazard Symbol	Restrictions
A	Cylinder	If product is flammable, poisonous (toxic) or corrosive, a green-white color combination cannot be used. If product is not corrosive, a solid black cylinder on white background cannot be used.

B	Flame	The color yellow cannot be used in any color combination. Unless the product, on contact with water, emits flammable gases, the color blue cannot be used in any color combination.
C	Flame with an 'O'	The colors red or blue cannot be used in any color combination of the two colors or with any other color.
D	1. Skull and Crossbones 2. Stylized "T" (with dot underneath) 3. Biohazard	No restriction No restriction No restriction
E	Corrosive	No restriction
F	Stylized "R" (Dangerously Reactive)	No restriction

Additional recommendations from Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada:

- The color orange is not to be used in any WHMIS symbol color combination, since this particular color is used in the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations exclusively for the identification of explosives.
- The same color combination be used for the WHMIS symbol as that prescribed by the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations, where classification of a product under the Controlled Products Regulations result in the use of the same pictogram for the WHMIS hazard symbol and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations label.

Trickle down effect occurring

While Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System regulations are geared to making the workplace a safer place, the Canadian consumer will also see signs of the information program.

Looking to save costs, some manufacturers of products destined for both industry and the consumer may decide to produce one type of package — meeting both consumer and industry-use standards.

Federal legislation requires suppliers of workplace materials to provide labelling and information sheets for materials designated as hazardous under WHMIS regulations.

"To alleviate confusion, some manufacturers might be putting WHMIS labels on all their products," said Ontario WHMIS co-ordinator Don Hall.

The paint industry, he said, might take this tact.

"Essentially, paint is the same (composition) whether it's in a one-gallon container for the consumer or a 20-gallon container for industry," said Hall.

"We could begin seeing a consumer

label on one side of a product and perhaps a small WHMIS label on the other side," he said.

It's foreseeable Canadians could start seeing cleaning products bearing one label, making the product suitable for both household and industry sale.

As new workers become employed where hazardous materials are being used, familiarity with WHMIS will grow.

A review of the WHMIS program in 1990 could mean more materials being added to the list of substances covered by WHMIS.

"The general public will become more aware (of the program) when they see WHMIS labels," said Ontario Farm Safety Association spokesman Bill Rose. "It's not unlike (the implementation of) the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act." Under that legislation, carriers of dangerous goods must be identified by special signs placed on the vehicle.

"Every accident on the highway...people can now see if the vehicle is carrying dangerous goods by the symbols on the vehicle," said Rose.

Organized labor backs WHMIS

By GIL HARDY
Ottawa Bureau

Thomson News Service

OTTAWA — Organized labor has been a full partner in the development of the Workplace Hazardous Material Information System and is pleased with the legislation.

"We are happy with the system," says Dave Bennett, occupational health and safety official with the Canadian Labor Congress. "We were a full participant in the discussions and negotiations that led to it."

But the CLC, representing more than two million unionized employees, will be watching how effectively the system is enforced, he said. Bill C-70, passed by Parliament in 1987 with all-party consent, requires suppliers to label hazardous materials according to national standards and to provide detailed information sheets.

WHMIS regulations came into effect Oct. 31, 1988, though secondary suppliers were given an extension to March 15, 1989.

As part of WHMIS, the provinces, which were involved in the multi-level discussions from which WHMIS evolved, drafted their own legislation, which requires employers to inform and educate workers about the materials they handle on the job.

The general response from the provinces has been quite good, said Bennett.

But there are concerns about some provinces. Nova Scotia has not fully implemented some "key provisions" of the trade secrets sections (covering requests for exemptions from some WHMIS regulations).

Quebec was behind schedule with its legislation and Alberta opted out of some provisions. Bennett says there are also "serious questions" about the enforceability of some of the regulations in British Columbia.

However, Bennett stresses that the

provinces have "done very-well" in agreeing to and acting on the Canada-wide system.

The CLC's only complaint about WHMIS is that claims and appeals under the trade secrets provision are not paid for out of the public purse. As it stands, if a supplier, employer or worker gets involved in a dispute over what should be exempt from WHMIS rules, he or she must pay all costs.

A claim or appeal costs \$2,000, which "is a great expense for a small union or an individual worker," Bennett says.

The CLC has created its own WHMIS education program for national use. The program is included in the group's "union schools" for workers.

The Ontario Federation of Labor and its Quebec counterpart have similar WHMIS programs.

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