

Labelling and Decanting Hazardous Chemicals Safety Alert (including Alcohol-based Hand Sanitiser)

Labels on hazardous chemicals identify hazards and give instructions on how to use them safely. They help businesses identify any safety controls needed in the workplace and tell workers how to deal safely with a chemical.

Manufacturers and importers of hazardous chemicals need to make sure they are labelled correctly so workers using them know the hazards. The Globally Harmonised System (GHS) is the classification and labelling which is used internationally to standardise and harmonise classification and labelling of chemicals. A GHS label is required for any hazardous chemical intended for predominantly workplace use. See GHS Symbols below.



In Australia, labels for workplace hazardous chemicals must be prepared in accordance with the model Code of Practice: Labelling of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals.

What happened?

In some instances, at ECU there has been confusion around:

- 1) the requirements of labelling of hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals.
- 2) and decanting or transferring of similar hazardous chemicals in containers produced by different manufactures. i.e. Hand sanitiser.

Information required on Hazardous Chemicals Labels

Hazardous chemicals are required by law to have a label written in English, legible, firmly fixed to the container (not obscured or in a spot where it could be removed i.e. not on the lid). The label must include the following:

- The product identifier
- The name, Australian address and business telephone number of the manufacturer or importer
- Any GHS hazard pictogram chemical
- Any hazard statement, signal word and precautionary statement consistent with the correct classification
- The identity and proportion of each ingredient
- Any information about the hazards, first aid and emergency procedures relevant to the chemical, which are not included in the hazard statement or precautionary statement. The label may include an emergency phone number for specific poisons or treatment advice.
- An expiry date, if applicable.

ECU and other businesses have a duty to ensure hazardous chemical containers are correctly labelled in accordance with the model WHS Regulations, including where the chemical is stored in pipework, or transferred or decanted from the chemical's original container at the workplace.

This duty does not apply where:

- The hazardous chemical is a consumer product, retaining its original label and only used in workplaces in household quantities, and in a way that is incidental to the nature of the work.
- A hazardous chemical is in transit.
- The hazardous chemical is used immediately after being put into the container and the container is thoroughly cleaned after the chemical has been used, handled or stored so that the container is in the condition it would be in if it had never contained the hazardous chemical

Decanting or Transferring Hazardous Chemicals

Try to keep hazardous substances in their original containers. If you must move hazardous substances from their original containers (e.g. for easier use around the workplace), do it safely and make sure:

- The new container is clean and doesn't contain residues of other substances that may cause a violent reaction and the new container is suitable to contain the chemical.
- Never use food or drink containers to hold hazardous substances. People can get confused about what's in the container even if it is labelled. Many people are seriously harmed after drinking hazardous substances stored in drink containers.

Should you require any advice on this please do not hesitate to contact the RBHSC or the Safety and Employee Relations team by calling 6304 2302 or emailing osh@ecu.edu.au