

District Site WHMIS Action Plan (2025–2026)

Goal: Ensure all hazardous products at District sites are properly identified, labelled, stored, supported by accessible Safety Data Sheets (SDSs), and that staff receive appropriate WHMIS education and training by June 2026.

Scope

This guidance applies to all District sites where hazardous products may be used, handled, or stored, including (but not limited to): schools, district offices, maintenance and transportation facilities, custodial storage areas, grounds/operations locations, kitchens/cafeterias, warehouses, technology education spaces, and science labs.

Roles and General Responsibilities

- Site leadership ensures WHMIS requirements are met at the site (inventory, labels, SDS access, storage practices, training, and disposal processes).
- JOHSC supports monitoring, awareness, and follow-up at the site level and helps identify gaps.
- Workers participate in WHMIS education/training, follow safe handling and storage directions, and report missing/damaged labels or missing SDSs.
- Facilities/Operations supports hazardous waste coordination and work-order processing for approved disposal.

WHMIS Action Plan Phases

Phase 1: Awareness & Preparation (Dec 2025 – Jan 2026)

- Review this guidance document and share it with staff who may use, handle, or store hazardous products.
- Confirm where SDSs will be kept at the site (binder and/or shared digital folder) and how staff will access them.

Phase 2: Inventory & Gap Analysis (Feb – Mar 2026)

- Conduct a site walkthrough to identify hazardous products and typical locations (e.g., custodial closets, shop areas, labs, kitchens, maintenance rooms, storage cages).
- Check each product for a supplier label and confirm an SDS is available.
- Log findings in a simple spreadsheet (product name, location, label status, SDS status, and any storage notes from the SDS).

Phase 3: Corrective Actions (Apr – May 2026)

- Obtain missing SDSs at these links: [Link 1](#) and [Link 2](#) (or manufacturer websites).
- Create workplace labels for decanted containers or any containers missing a legible supplier label.
- Organize SDSs so they are easy to find during daily work and during emergencies (clearly marked binder and/or a shared digital folder).

Phase 4: Safe Storage Review (Apr – June 2026)

- Review storage practices against SDS storage instructions (especially Section 7: Handling and Storage).
- Segregate incompatible substances (e.g., acids away from bases; oxidizers away from flammables) and use appropriate storage cabinets where required.
- Ensure containers are suitable, in good condition, and stored to reduce spill and exposure risk (secondary containment where appropriate).
- Clearly identify and store materials with special storage requirements (e.g., temperature-controlled, light-sensitive, moisture-sensitive, highly reactive).
- Remove expired, degraded, unnecessary, or unknown materials from service (see Disposal section).

Phase 5: Training (By June 2026)

- Ensure at least one member of each JOHSC completes WHMIS training (WHMIS 2015 standard).
- Where staff at the site use or may be exposed to hazardous products, ensure they receive WHMIS education and site-specific training relevant to their tasks.
- A free WHMIS 2015 course and certificate is available (external provider).

Core WHMIS Requirements (Quick Reference)

Labels

Supplier labels: All hazardous products must have a supplier label that includes a product identifier, hazard pictograms, signal word, hazard statements, precautionary statements, supplier information, and a reference to the SDS.

Workplace labels: Required when a product is decanted into another container or when a supplier label is missing, damaged, or illegible. A workplace label must include the product name and safe handling information (or a reference directing workers to consult the SDS).

Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)

An SDS must be available at the site for each WHMIS-controlled hazardous product. SDSs provide detailed information about hazards, safe handling, storage requirements, PPE, spill response, and first aid measures. SDSs must be accessible to workers during all hours of operation.

Safe Storage of Hazardous Materials

- Store products according to SDS storage instructions (temperature, ventilation, light, moisture, and segregation requirements).
- Segregate incompatible substances; avoid co-storage that could cause reactions or increase fire/explosion risk.
- Use appropriate storage locations and cabinets where required (e.g., flammable storage cabinets; corrosion-resistant storage for corrosives).

- Ensure containers are suitable, closed, in good condition, and clearly labelled; do not keep products in food containers.
- Limit quantities and review stock periodically to remove expired, degraded, or no-longer-needed products.
- Store hazardous products away from food, student-accessible areas, and ignition sources, and maintain good housekeeping in storage rooms.

First Aid Awareness & Access to SDSs

- Ensure first aid attendants know where SDSs are located (binder and/or digital) and how to access them quickly.
- Ensure first aid attendants have general awareness of the types of hazardous products at the site and common exposure routes (skin, eyes, inhalation, ingestion).
- Use SDS Section 4 (First-Aid Measures) to guide response to chemical exposure.
- Ensure a clear process exists for reporting chemical exposures and sharing relevant SDS information during an incident.

Disposal of Hazardous Materials and Unknown Substances

- Unlabeled, unidentified, or unknown substances must not be stored or used.
- Hazardous materials and substances of unknown identity must be disposed of through the District's approved hazardous waste contractor.
- Disposal requests must be submitted using a work order (e.g., through the District work order system / eBASE) so Facilities can coordinate safe pickup and documentation.
- Hazardous materials must not be poured down drains or disposed of in regular garbage.

Reference List: Common Hazardous Products at District Sites

Use this list to prompt site checks. This is not exhaustive.

Custodial / Facilities / Maintenance / Transportation

- Cleaning agents and disinfectants (including concentrated products)
- Degreasers, solvents, adhesives, lubricants, fuels
- Paints, thinners, aerosols, spray products
- Batteries, corrosives, compressed gases (as applicable)

Science / Technology Education / Shop Areas

- Acids (e.g., hydrochloric, sulfuric, acetic) and bases (e.g., sodium hydroxide, ammonia solutions)
- Organic solvents (e.g., acetone, ethanol/isopropyl alcohol)
- Indicators and solutions (e.g., phenolphthalein, iodine solutions)
- Inorganic salts (e.g., copper sulfate, silver nitrate, potassium permanganate)
- Reactive or highly hazardous substances (oxidizers, peroxides, perchlorates, picric acid, lead compounds)

Art / Career Programs / Kitchens

- Paints, varnishes, fixatives, craft resins, aerosol products
- Adhesives (including solvent-based)
- Cleaning/sanitizing chemicals used for food-service areas

Final Outcome Checklist

- ☐ Inventory completed and kept on file
- ☐ SDSs accessible during all operating hours (binder and/or digital)
- ☐ Labels complete and legible (supplier labels and workplace labels where needed)
- ☐ Storage reviewed against SDS guidance and incompatibles segregated
- ☐ First aid attendants aware of chemical hazards and have SDS access
- ☐ Unknown/obsolete substances removed and disposal work orders submitted
- ☐ WHMIS education/training completed as required

References (for additional guidance)

- WorkSafeBC: WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) – employer and worker responsibilities
- WorkSafeBC: OHS Regulation Part 5 – Chemical Agents and Biological Agents (includes WHMIS and storage provisions)
- CCOHS / WHMIS.org: WHMIS labels, SDSs, and education/training resources
- Health Canada: WHMIS storage requirements quick facts (general safe storage guidance)