Safety Topic: OSHA’s Guidelines on Labeling Products

As of 2012, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has adopted new chemical labeling requirements as part of the changes made to the Hazard Communication Standard. The changes made to the HCS, which are listed within the OSHA General Industry standards as 29 CFR 1910.1200, bring the standards into alignment with the United Nations’ Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). These changes help ensure improved quality and consistency in the classification and labeling of all chemicals, and also enhance worker comprehension.

What’s HCS?
- A more performance-based standard with more structured based requirements
- Emphasis on symbols and visual triggers
  - Information about chemical hazards are shown on labels in which images are used to alert the user (i.e. pictograms)
  - User is immediately able to recognize the hazard present when encountering the chemical
- Label provides information on how to handle the chemical so that chemical users are informed on how to protect themselves
- The GHS uses a total of nine pictograms.

Safe Work Practices Involving Labels
- Label all containers with at least the following information:
  1. Identity of the chemical
  2. All potential hazards associated with the chemical
  3. Manufacturer’s name, address, and telephone number
- Know where SDSs are kept in your workplace, and become familiar with their contents. An SDS is needed for each chemical at the workplace.

For more information or questions about correctly labeling products, please speak with your supervisor or contact a member of the Campus Life Safety and Regulatory Compliance team.