



Instructor Guide

WHMIS

Topic Overview (why the topic is important to the students)

Many chemicals used by auto mechanics are hazardous, and may cause conditions ranging from minor skin irritation to serious injury and disease. If workers are expected to work with hazardous materials, their employer is required to inform them that the materials are hazardous and train the workers in their safe use.

All B.C. workplaces that use materials identified as hazardous (“controlled products”) by the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) are required to follow the WHMIS system. The system uses consistent labeling to help workers recognize hazardous materials. The system and labels provide specific information on handling, storing and disposing of such materials.

Demonstration and Discussion Topics

- **Discuss** the hazardous materials in the shop, where the WHMIS information is kept, where emergency spill equipment is located, and where emergency numbers are to be found.
- **Tour the shop** with the students, pointing out the hazardous materials and review which type of PPE would be required for each.
- **Distribute** the student handout.
- **Explain** what the WHMIS system is.
- **Discuss** how the WHMIS system is designed to protect workers.
- **Review** the list of 4 questions, reminding students that they need to understand safety issues before they start work, and that it is okay to ask questions if they don't understand something or they need a reminder.
- **Review and discuss** the list of safety tips.
- **Emphasize** that good housekeeping and careful handling are mandatory.
- **Explain** the WHMIS labels and the meaning of each label.
- **Explain** briefly what can be done in the workplace to minimize the risk of hazardous materials (e.g., fume hood, purging, and selection of less toxic or less flammable alternatives, ventilation).

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- **Make it real.** Tell at least two true stories of injuries from your experience, or use the following examples:
 - A worker was using an electric drill equipped with a mixer to stir paint. The vapours ignited, burning the worker.
 - A worker accidentally contacted the tip of a flame when using an unshielded gas-burning torch. The flame ignited his coveralls, because he had earlier splashed flammable liquid on them. The worker suffered second-degree burns to his legs from the hips to the ankles.
- **Discuss** the attitude that “it won’t happen to me”. Remind them that an injury can and will happen if they take shortcuts or are careless.
- **Instruct** the students to identify and report any WHMIS safety concerns.
- **Answer** any questions or concerns they might have.
- **Set a good example** by working safely at all times.

Resources

- WHMIS at Work
http://www.worksafebc.com/publication/s/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/whmis.pdf
- Wear flame-resistant clothing
<http://www2.worksafebc.com/i/posters/pdfs/1999/ha9914.pdf>