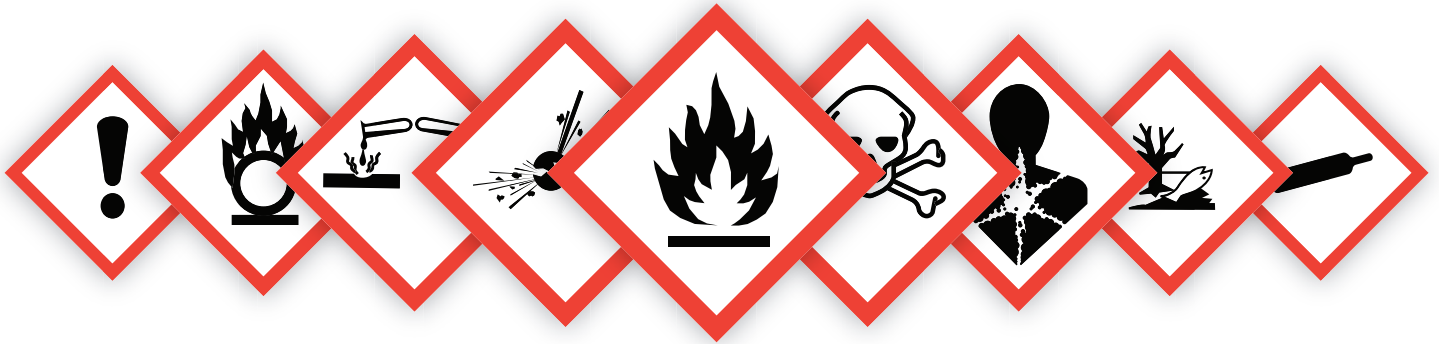# Easing the transition to GHS label compliance

Flexible, lower cost options enable organizations to print durable GHS labels on demand

At the 5.3 million organizations exposed to hazardous chemicals in the U.S., managers in charge of safety, purchasing, facilities or operations must now ask if their chemical labels are GHS compliant.

The "Globally Harmonized System" (GHS) was established by the United Nations to create a unified system for identifying and communicating hazardous chemicals. In the U.S., OSHA set a June 2015 deadline for chemical manufacturers to use GHS compliant labels, followed by a December 2015 deadline for distributors, and June 2016 deadline for end users.

Chemical manufacturers must re-classify their hazardous chemicals based on a common chemical classification system defined by GHS. They must update their safety data sheets and use GHS-compliant labels to identify their hazardous chemicals.

Chemical importers and distributors, in turn, must ensure the hazardous chemicals they sell have GHS-compliant safety data sheets and GHS-compliant labels.

Employers with hazardous chemicals in the workplace, for their part, must ensure they have safety data sheets and labels for their exposed workers, and train them to handle the chemicals properly.

On each GHS label, six specific items of data are required: Product Name or Identifier; Hazard Statement; Signal Word; GHS Pictogram symbols; Precautionary Statement; and Supplier Information.

In place of the familiar black and white pictogram symbols previously used in safety labeling, it is important for Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) managers to realize that GHS labels now require pictogram symbols that convey hazard information with a red diamond border.

Implementing GHS labeling can seem daunting, particularly to small and medium sized businesses, but it does not have to be. While large organizations can hire integrators to automate GHS software with a bank of printers tied into high-end ERP infrastructure, small and medium sized businesses do not require this approach.

Instead of investing in costly dedicated printer/label/software systems, small to medium sized organizations are easing the transition to GHS label compliance. More are turning to flexible, lower cost options, such as industrial-grade labels from Avery, that allow printing durable GHS labels on demand with existing laser printers and certain inkjet printers.

While Avery has been a leading label brand in the office market for decades, it has just recently expanded into the industrial market and developed industrial-grade labels designed to be GHS compliant, such as its UltraDuty GHS Chemical Labels.

Unlike standard labels, industrial labels are used in harsh environments like warehouses, manufacturing facilities, and in the field so must be very durable and able to withstand exposure to chemicals, abrasion, tearing, moisture, sunlight, and extreme temperatures.

The challenge, however, is that to be GHS compliant, labels must stay reliably affixed without fading or becoming unreadable despite harsh indoor or outdoor conditions including interna-

tional shipping. This requires not only a durable label substrate but also a marine-grade adhesive.

As such, Avery designed its UltraDuty GHS Chemical Labels to meet the most rigorous GHS requirements. The durable synthetic labels are chemical resistant, tear resistant, abrasion resistant, and constructed with a marine-grade adhesive that is waterproof and passes a 90-day seawater submersion adhesion test. Unlike typical labels , which crack and harden in harsh conditions, they are UV resistant with 2+ years of outdoor UV life. They are also temperature resistant, can be applied as low as 10° F, and used as high as 220° F in the field when printed from color laser printers or 300° F when printed from inkjet drum label printers.

"Staying GHS compliant will not only help organizations to avoid OSHA fines, sanctions, or auditing, but also will help them to open new global markets since GHS is a global standard," says Glen Markham, Vice President of Business Development at RightAnswer. com, Inc., a chemical compliance and information specialist.

Markham notes that remaining GHS label compliant depends on the durability of the appropriate label substrate, getting the label content right, and effective document management.

To help small and medium sized organizations print GHS-compliant labels from their existing printers on demand, some companies provide label-printing

software along with their labels.

Avery, for instance, is one of the only companies that provides such GHS-compliant label software at no cost. The Avery Design & Print GHS Wizard makes it easy for employees to create and print their own GHS labels from pre-designed templates or to create them step-by-step on demand at their desk. Most employees will find the process intuitive, since it resembles creating an office document from pre-designed templates.

The free software includes all the pictograms and GHS compliant statements needed for GHS labeling; easy insertion of company logo or other images; customizable text; simple generation of 18 types of barcodes; and a sequential numbering feature to add lot numbers or other variable data.

No download is required since the software operates from Avery's website (www.avery.com/GHS), and GHS labels can be securely saved online or to a computer. Besides GHS compliant labels, the software is also capable of printing other safety labels such as ANSI, OSHA, NFPA, and DOT labels.

The GHS labels are available in a range of sizes to fit drums, totes, pails, cans, jugs, containers, and even small bottles. They can be applied to a variety of surfaces such as metal, plastic, glass, ceramic, polycarbonate, painted surfaces, and more. Similar to Avery's office labels, the GHS labels retain Easy Peel, smudge-free, and jam-free capability.

For labeling that requires the durability of extra lamination, the company also offers Easy Align Self-Laminating ID Labels, which come with a clear laminate so no lamination machine or additional layer of tape is needed. The material is UV and water resistant, and resists scuffing, tearing and smudging, making them ideal for use in warehouses, storage areas and worksites.

To help companies stay compliant for GHS and other regulatory situations, including OSHA safety communication, Avery has partnered with RightAnswer. Through a portal in Avery's website, RightAnswer offers comprehensive online access to over 100 proprietary, government, and EHS data sources with over 11 million documents covering more than 400,000 chemical substances, all integrated and available through a single interface.

"For organizations that keep asking EHS managers to do more with less, Avery's partnering with RightAnswer can help them stay not only GHS label compliant, but also up to date on the chemical issues they're concerned about," says Markham. "It's an online one-stop chemical compliance and information solution that's offered at a discount through the Avery website portal."

For more info, visit www.avery.com/GHS