



The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is a Canada-wide information system providing specific vital information about hazardous materials (called controlled products in the legislation).

WHMIS requires that suppliers of potentially hazardous materials convey specified hazard information to employers, and that employers pass that hazard information on to their workers for the protection of their health and safety.

WHMIS has three major components:

1) WHMIS labels

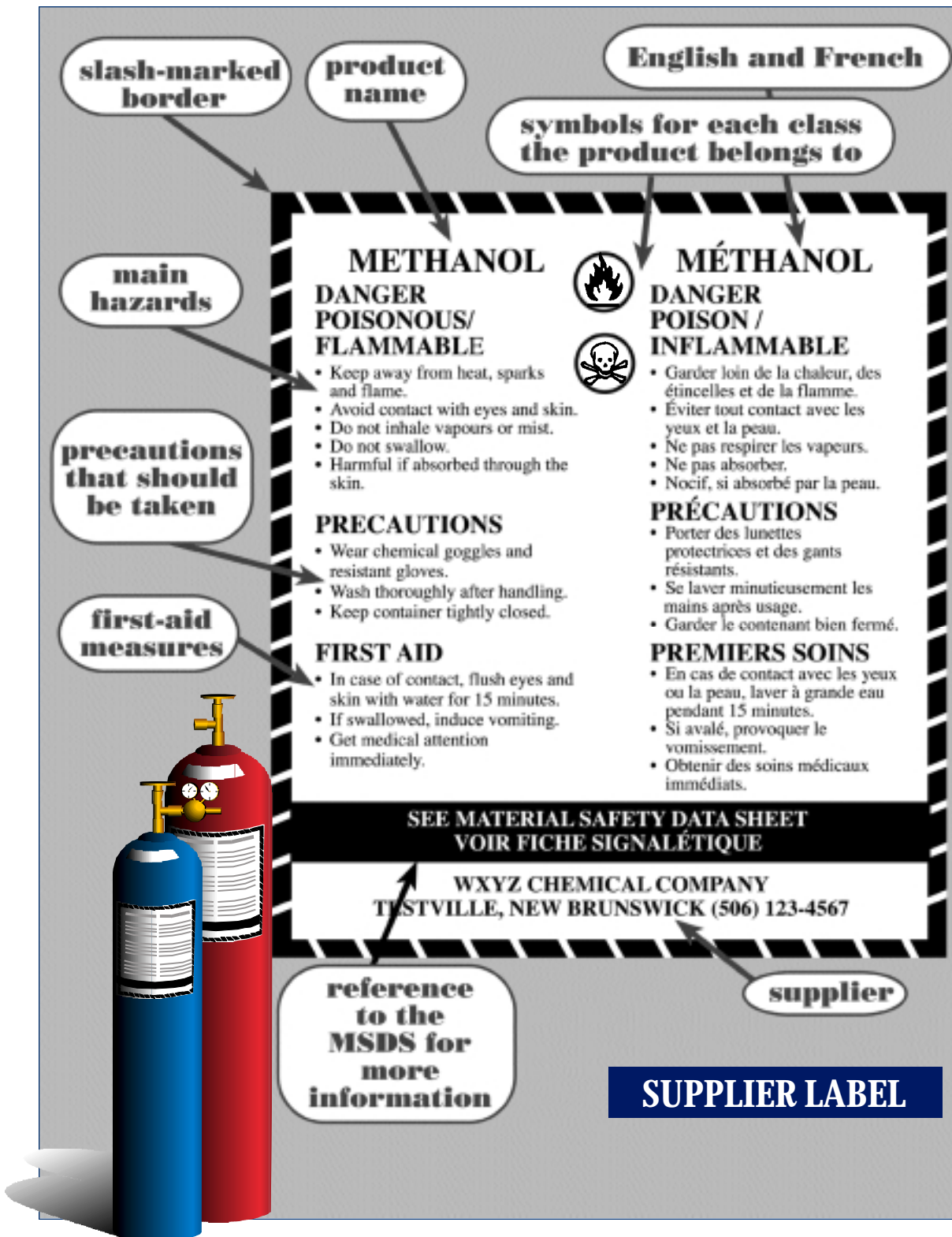
They provide the essential information needed in order to handle a particular product safely. **Under WHMIS, controlled products should always be labelled.** There are two main kinds of labels:

Supplier label – Every controlled product received at the workplace from a supplier must have a complete WHMIS supplier label (see illustration). If it's not the case, or if the label is incomplete, the product can not be used. All supplier labels must be written in English and in French and have a distinctive slash-marked border.

Workplace label – As long as a controlled product remains in its original container with a supplier label on it, no additional labelling is required. However, if put into another container for use in the workplace, the product will require a workplace label. Workplace labels are less detailed than supplier labels and don't have a prescribed format. Still, they must contain the product identifier, information for safe handling and a reference to the MSDS.

2) Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

An MSDS is a document that provides nine categories of information about the product's physical characteristics and its hazardous properties. A 16 category format also exists and is acceptable.



SUPPLIER LABEL

Suppliers must provide an MSDS for each controlled product they sell or import. Employers must ensure that up-to-date MSDSs are received and readily available to workers at all times. Workers must be educated in the content required on the data sheet and the applicable information on it.

3) Worker education

Under WHMIS, employers must ensure that **all workers working with or in proximity to controlled products** are properly trained in:

- the hazards of the controlled products;
- the labelling and MSDS requirements; and
- the procedures for safe use, storage, handling and disposal of controlled products, and procedures for dealing with fugitive emissions and emergencies.

Training provided to employees must be developed in consultation with the joint health and safety committee, if any, and reviewed at least annually.

Certain exemptions from the requirement to provide labels and MSDSs exist. For their listing or for more information about WHMIS, see the New Brunswick WHMIS Regulation 88-221 or contact the WHSCC at 1 800 442-9776.

