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! CANADA SDS

Proactively Preventing Occupational Hazards in Schools

After many years of discussion, Canada's national hazard communication standard, the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), aligned with the international standard of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) in 2015, rendering the 1988 WHMIS null and void. While some aspects of the older version remained, others were modified, like introducing new hazard classes or classifying chemicals for the new safety data sheets (SDS).

CanadaSDS was formed at that momentous time to help the education sector and municipalities conform to the new WHMIS regulatory needs. Its aim, however, was not just to guide its clients in complying with the new norms. It had the vision to bring preemptive changes to occupational health and safety (OHS) in highly focused domains like school boards, academic institutions, and municipalities.

To support that vision, CanadaSDS combines its technological solutions around safety data management with its integrated services to package itself as a one-stop, full-service company taking care of all its clients' workplace safety needs.

"We take the burden off our client's shoulders and act like a full-time equivalent of their OHS officials and help them transition from a reactive OHS approach to a more proactive stance," Gary Toste, CEO of CanadaSDS.

One way CanadaSDS brings this proactiveness is by building solutions that can readily push out safety information to students. For instance, consider a school that has a woodshop with power tools like a bandsaw, drill press, and scroll saw. It is

imperative that students are made aware of the safety instructions. CanadaSDS aims to change this narrative by building a system that lets students easily access the safety data about those tools, and complete safety quizzes that teachers can review before they even enter the woodshop.

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The same approach can proactively improve students' knowledge of different chemicals before entering a chemistry lab. The information is already in the school's SDS records, but CanadaSDS makes it readily available beyond regulatory compliance needs—to increase students' and teachers' awareness.

Actively educating students and teachers on the safety of different tools used onsite proves CanadaSDS is not a conventional safety data sheet management solution provider. More than 100 academic institutions across the country trust CanadaSDS for accident protection, which speaks for itself.

One of them is the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), with 41,000 employees and 246,000 students in 584 schools. The sheer number of schools and people it manages is enough to justify the complexity associated with its safety data management system. One of their biggest challenges was maintaining compliance with the onsite products, many of which were

brought off-the-shelf and didn't have an SDS in place.



CanadaSDS's easy-to-use system, with its simple workflow, aided the school's OHS officials in requesting SDS. Once the compliance issues were resolved, TDSB started leveraging the safety data management system to proactively create student awareness. CanadaSDS ran a pilot program where they provided a QR code for every power tool in the school's elementary woodshops. Students could scan the code to view an informational video on its safety aspects before using the tools, making the project a great success.

Working hand-in-hand with clients to understand their unique needs and develop a highly customized safety data management solution around it is a major differentiating factor for CanadaSDS. The modules and features of the solution can be tweaked at any time to suit the changing needs of its clients. These extensive capabilities are why CanadaSDS is the leader in the Canadian market, and its sister company, US SDS, is increasingly carving its niche in the U.S. market. **ET**

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The annual listing of 10 companies in Canada that are at the forefront of providing Education Technology solutions and impacting the industry