

How to Work Safely with

How to Work Safely with - Products using the "Environment" Pictogram

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What does this pictogram mean?

The pictogram shows a tree with no leaves and a dead fish to represent harm to the environment.

NOTE: Classification and labelling of the environmental hazard group is not required for WHMIS. However, suppliers may voluntarily choose to disclose these hazards on labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDSs).



What are hazards to the environment?

If the product only has this pictogram, the main concern is its toxicity to aquatic life. Aquatic hazards may include short-term (acute) hazards to various aquatic life forms (such as fish, crustaceans, algae, and aquatic plants).

It also includes long-term (chronic) hazards which looks at long-term (chronic) impacts on aquatic life forms such as bioaccumulation (buildup of a product in an organism) and degradation (persistence, or how long it will remain in the environment).

- Bioaccumulation refers to the accumulation of a product in aquatic organisms. The bioaccumulation may or may not have a toxic effect on some organisms but it is a concern because when other organisms eat smaller organisms (e.g., accumulates in algae; little fish eat algae; big fish eats little fish), they accumulate more of the product. Eventually, the levels can have a negative impact.
- Degradation of the product refers to whether the product breaks down quickly or whether it is persistent and remains in the environment. Examples of the impacts include reduced spawning, genetic problems in offspring, and behavioural changes.

What classes use the environment pictogram?

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) has assigned this pictogram to be used for:

- Hazardous to the aquatic environment - short-term (acute) - category 1, and
- Hazardous to the aquatic environment - long-term (chronic) - categories 1 and 2.

Note that hazardous to the aquatic environment - short-term (acute) - categories 2 and 3, and hazardous to the aquatic environment - long-term (chronic) - categories 3 and 4 have no pictogram assigned.

What are the hazards of products that have the environment pictogram?

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) has assigned the following signal words and hazard statements:

Hazard Class and Category	Signal Word	Hazard Statement
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – short-term (acute) – category 1	Warning	Very toxic to aquatic life
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – short-term (acute) – category 2	No signal word	Toxic to aquatic life
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – short-term (acute) – category 3	No signal word	Harmful to aquatic life
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – long-term (chronic) – category 1	Warning	Very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – long-term (chronic) – category 2	No signal word	Toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – long-term (chronic) – category 3	No signal word	Harmful to aquatic life with long lasting effects
Hazardous to the aquatic environment – long-term (chronic) – category 4	No signal word	May cause long lasting harmful effects to aquatic life

Are there other hazards associated with products that use the environment pictogram?

In addition to the specific hazards identified by the environment pictogram, it is important to remember that the product may have other hazards. If the product using this pictogram is also potentially hazardous to humans (e.g., physical or health hazards), it would have other hazard pictograms to warn about its other properties.

How can products with the environment pictogram be handled safely?

- Check the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and label for information about the hazards and precautions.
- Use the smallest amount necessary.
- Avoid release to the environment.
- Immediately report leaks, spills or failures of the safety equipment (e.g. ventilation system).
- Recycle and reuse the product, if possible.

- Properly dispose of the product and its container as hazardous waste – do not dump them down the drain, on the ground, or into any body of water.
 - Prevent the product from contaminating groundwater, surface waters, and the sewer system. Protect floor drains, and cover the opening to the sewer if able to do so and appropriate.
 - Follow label warnings even if the container appears to be empty. Dispose of (or recycle) empty containers through an approved waste management facility.
 - Regularly inspect and maintain the equipment used for handling the product.
 - Inform maintenance personnel of any special procedures and precautions before they begin to work on equipment.
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How can products with the environment pictogram be stored safely?

- Store the product in a secure, dry, [well-ventilated](#) location. Storage areas should have sills to prevent leaks from escaping into sewers.
 - Use secondary containment for containers such as drip trays to contain leaks or spills. Empty trays regularly to avoid overflow.
 - Monitor the use of the product. Unexpected increased use may indicate a leak.
 - Isolate loading and unloading areas from surface water drainage systems. If not possible, protect drains using covers, sandbags, etc.
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What should I do in case of an emergency?

- Report leaks and spills to the people responsible for handling emergencies where you work.
 - Have spill control procedures and equipment ready (e.g., absorbent spill control materials, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.).
 - Contain the spill quickly by damming or diking with spill socks or suitable absorbent material (such as kitty litter, vermiculite, etc.). Do not leave the spill site unattended.
 - Be aware of applicable legislation in your jurisdiction concerning materials that are hazardous to the environment (e.g., permits).
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