

Chlorinated Solvent Use

Safety Alert

Issue #:11-2016

Enform

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Description of Incident:

During a baseline industrial hygiene assessment, aerosol cans of chlorinated solvents were observed in the storage area. Within this organization, chlorinated solvents are on the prohibited substance list and should not have been on the premises.

Chlorinated solvents are very effective at degreasing and lubricating metal components and have traditionally been used to clean brake drums.

Chlorinated chemicals are known or suspected human carcinogens and can also cause a variety of other health effects such as central nervous system impairment, kidney and liver damage, skin irritation and in the case of methylene chloride, testicular damage.

Manufacturer's Safety Data Sheets (SDS) make reference to the use of the product in well ventilated environments unless controls such as local exhaust mechanical ventilation or respirator protection are provided. Additionally, chlorinated solvents should not be used in proximity to ultraviolet sources such as welding, because the solvents may decompose into hydrochloric acid and phosgene gas.



Example WHMIS 2015 Pictograms Applicable to Chlorinated Solvents

What Caused It?

A lack of awareness and adherence to the company chemical management program.

Contributing Factors Included:

- Although there are alternatives, workers sometimes prefer chlorinated solvents, because they are excellent solvents and degreasers, and many are non-flammable
- Chlorinated solvents may be less irritating when compared with some of the alternative products

Corrective/Preventative Actions:

- An alert was sent out within the company reinforcing adherence to the chemical management program
- Alternative non-chlorinated products were recommended, making note that some of the alternatives may be flammable

By industry, for industry

