

Methylene Chloride

Your Right to Know

Summary:

Exposure to methylene chloride can occur in the workplace or in the environment following releases to air, water, land, or groundwater. Exposure can also occur when people use certain aerosol paint sprays and paint strippers. Foam makers and companies that use methylene chloride as a cleaning solvent are at risk. This substance has been found in at least 746 of 1,300 National Priorities List sites identified by the EPA.

Exposure Risks

There is no antidote for methylene chloride. Laboratory studies show that repeat exposure to methylene chloride causes kidney and liver damage and cancer in animals that breathe air or drink water contaminated with this chemical. Avoid breathing vapor and use with adequate ventilation. Effects of methylene chloride on human health and the environment depend on how much methylene chloride is present and the length and frequency of exposure.

Breathing large amounts of methylene chloride for short periods of time adversely affects the human nervous system and heart. Effects range from unsteadiness and numbness in fingers and toes to unconsciousness and death. The heart has to work harder, and the blood carries less oxygen as the body breaks methylene chloride down to carbon monoxide.

Direct contact with methylene chloride liquid or vapor irritates the skin and eyes.

Methylene chloride enters the body when breathed in with contaminated air or when consumed with contaminated food or water. It can also be absorbed through skin contact.

The Department of Health and Human Services has determined that methylene chloride may reasonably be anticipated to be a carcinogen. Methylene chloride has not been shown to cause cancer in humans exposed to vapors in the workplace. However, breathing high concentrations of it for long periods of time did increase the incidence of cancer in mice.

Do You Know Your Methylene Chloride Exposure?

Passive dosimeters are the most convenient way to monitor your environment!

The *Kem Medical VAPOR-TRAK*[®] 8543 methylene chloride monitor has been validated for the OSHA 8-hour TWA exposure limit of 25 ppm and 125 ppm for a 15-minute STEL.

All VAPOR-TRAK[®] badges are:

- Accurate, with reproducible results
- Easy to Use
- Designed for personal and area monitoring
- Full validation studies available
- Phone Notification of High Results
- Technical Assistance
- Pre-paid return postage and laboratory analysis inclusive

