



North Carolina Wing Weekly Safety Blast



2018 - Topic #8 – Chemical Safety

Reason for this Blast:

Chemicals are a major part of our everyday life at home, work, and play. Examples include toxins, corrosives, solvents and numerous other substances. As long as we take proper precautions, these substances can be handled safely.

Chemicals that you use at home include gasoline, paints, fertilizers, lawn chemicals, bug spray, paint strippers, kerosene, bleach, and other household cleaners. Chemicals you may use at work are facility-specific solvents, laboratory chemicals, fuels, paint, office copier chemicals, correction fluid, lubricants, and corrosives.

Chemical Exposures May Occur By:

- Inhalation: Breathing in dusts, mists, and vapors - Example: Working with bags of concrete at home without a respirator.
- Ingestion: Eating contaminated food - Example: Having lunch in the work area where there are airborne contaminants.
- Absorption: Skin contact with a chemical - Example: Contact dermatitis or an eye irritation.
- Injection: Forcing an agent into the body through a needle or a high-pressure device - Example: Needle stick or misuse of a high-pressure washer.

You Can Protect Yourself Against Chemical Hazards By:

- Reading container labels, material safety data sheets (MSDSs or SDSs), and safe-work instructions before you handle a chemical.
- Using appropriate chemical quantities, ventilation, guarding, and other engineering controls.
- Using specified Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that may include chemical-splash goggles, respirators, gloves, aprons, steel-toed shoes, safety glasses with side shields, etc.
- Ensure proper fit and that you are trained in the use of your PPE.
- Inspecting your PPE prior to use.
- Knowing the location of safety showers and eyewash stations and how to use them.
- Washing your hands before eating, especially after handling chemicals.



MAIN DISCUSSION POINT OF THIS SAFETY BLAST

Chemicals are all around us and it is easy to become complacent around the hazards. Take a fresh look at the chemicals you handle, their hazards, and ways to protect yourself from those hazards.