
2011 Guide to Automotive Chemical Exposure

The Serious Health Effects of Chemical Exposure



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Employees in the automotive industry need to be aware of the health risks of exposure to hazardous substances that they potentially face every day.

There are many tasks that involve the manual handling of chemicals, placing employees at risk of injuries and adverse health effects. These health effects may impact employees' health immediately or take months, or even years, to appear.

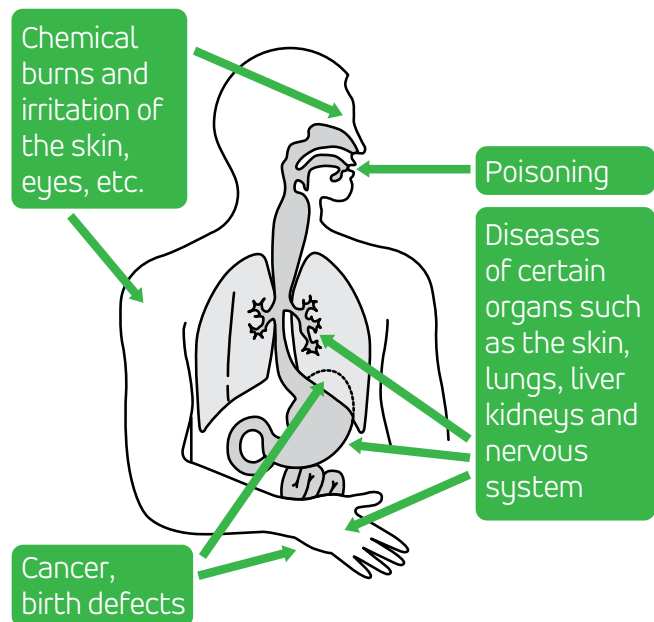
Unsafe work environments are a quick way to lose a reliable and efficient work force. Employees are understandably drawn to workplaces that protect their safety and welfare. Those suffering from health problems due to contact with hazardous substances are likely to need days off to be treated or to recover. Limiting employee exposure can limit these problems.

Hazardous substances are chemicals that have the potential to impact negatively on health. Dangerous goods are substances that may result in immediate physical or chemical effects such as fire, explosion, corrosion and poisoning, affecting property, the environment or people.

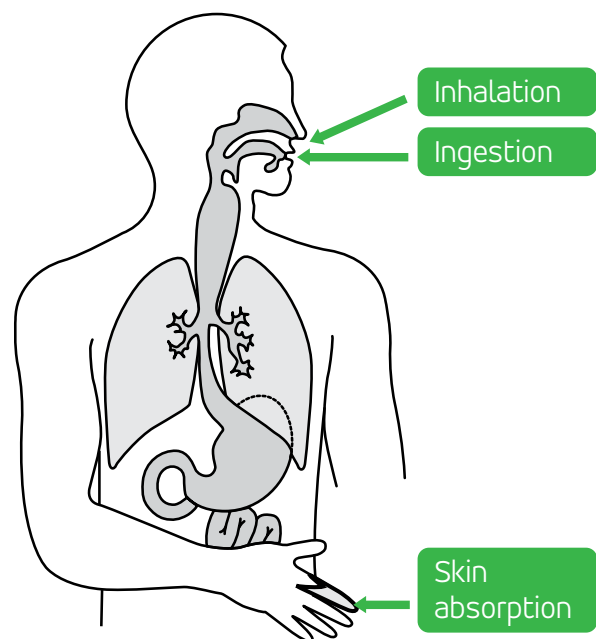
Separate legislation, focused on controlling risks, applies to hazardous substances and dangerous goods. In the case of a hazardous substance that is also classified as a dangerous good, the requirements of both pieces of legislation apply. As there may be overlaps, each legislation complements the other, ensuring the effective control of all risks.

Effects that may result from exposure to hazardous substances include poisoning; irritation; chemical burns; sensitisation; cancer; birth defects; and diseases of certain organs such as the skin, lungs, liver, kidneys and nervous system. The substance, nature

Exposure to Substances



Routes of Exposure



and extent of the exposure will determine the severity of the health effects.

Even the least of these harmful effects can disrupt the work and home life of automotive employees. Steps to prevent and reduce exposure are necessary and easy to take.

A wide range of chemicals are classified as hazardous and include:

- solids;
- powders;
- liquids;
- gases;
- pure chemicals;
- mixtures.

Workplace use often causes these chemicals to generate:

- vapours;
- fumes;
- dusts;
- mists.

Hazardous substances that are created by workplace activities are to be monitored and guarded against in the same way as those imported into the workplace.

Depending on the chemical and how it is used in the workplace, there are a number of ways it may enter the body. The major routes of exposure to hazardous substances are inhalation of vapours, fumes, dusts and mists; ingestion in to the body (e.g. unclean hands, contaminated food, smoking; and absorption in to the body through direct contact with the skin, eyes etc).

Skin that repeatedly comes into contact with hazardous substances can develop painful and embarrassing rashes known as Chemical Exposure Dermatitis.

Hazardous chemicals include:

- acute toxins such as cyanide;
- substances harmful after repeated or prolonged exposure such as mercury and silica;
- corrosives such as sulphuric acid and caustic soda;
- irritants such as ammonia;
- sensitising agents such as isocyanates; and
- carcinogens such as benzene and vinyl chloride.

The Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008 does not classify lead, substances containing organisms which may cause diseases, radioactive substances, and items/substances brought into the workplace for personal use as hazardous substances.

Requirements for managing hazardous substances and dangerous goods risks are specified in the Dangerous Goods Act, Regulations and Codes of Practice and the Hazardous Substances Regulations.

Employers and self-employed automotive workers must be proactive in guarding against exposure to chemicals, hazardous substances and dangerous goods. Accidents, injuries and health problems can be prevented by cautious and informed workplace practices. Structure the work environment as a place of safety and insist on taking every necessary and legal precaution.

AlSCO's EcoSafe Washer offers a solution for reducing chemical exposure in your workplace.



Watch a video demonstration

ECOSAFE WASHER

The mobile Ecosafe Washer outperforms all other part cleaners without the need for harmful solvents.

- ✓ Non toxic, non flammable, non hazardous and solvent free
- ✓ Removes OH&S and environmental concerns
- ✓ Mobile and simple to use

For a demonstration, please visit ecosafewasher.com.au

The Ecosafe Washer is leading the way in limiting chemical exposure in the workplace.



For more information about the AlSCO Ecosafe Washer, please contact us on **1300 136 784** or visit our website ecosafewasher.com.au