

Update from the California Department of Public Health

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Overview

- Promoting safer chemicals policies:
Focus on **cleaning products**
- Increasing awareness of health effects from
lower-level, chronic **lead exposure**
- Preventing transmission of workplace
infectious diseases

Occupational Health Branch Initiative

- Achieving Safer Chemicals Use Policies:
 - A Partnership between Occupational and Environmental Health
- Expand OHB activities to eliminate or reduce use of toxic chemicals in the workplace
- Goal: prevent exposures to workers, communities & environment

Why focus on cleaning products?

- Found to cause or aggravate **asthma** in workers & bystanders
- Cases in health care, schools, food services
- Large #'s employed in building services
- Low-wage workers, minorities, immigrants



Identifying safer cleaning products

- Many claims made for “green,” “organic” or “Earth-friendly” products – who to believe?
- Ingredient information difficult to obtain; chemical hazards not always disclosed
- Best to rely on independent third-party certification with transparent standards

OHB provided input to revised consensus standard



- Green Seal – non-profit organization developing environmental standards since 1991
- GS-37 Environmental Standard for Industrial and Institutional Cleaners – revised (4th ed.) 8/29/08, effective August 2009

Revision process

- Standards Development Team & Stakeholders Committee scoped revisions
- Public comment on drafts by “registered stakeholders” incl. OHB
- Consensus reached on many issues
- Issues with “sustained opposition” further discussed, then decided by Executive Committee

Asthma-causing chemicals considered in revisions

- Final standard prohibits chemicals causing allergic-type asthma (at > 0.01%)
 - Irritant-induced asthma not addressed
- Asthmagen list by AOEC* used in criteria
- Prohibits diethanolamine, triethanolamine
- Asthmagen evaluation to be done on concentrated product, not after dilution
- Precautionary, hazard-based approach is appropriate for sensitizers

* *Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics*

Other changes to GS-37

- Skin absorption criterion (references ACGIH TLV & German MAK skin notations)
- Mutagens prohibited (GHS category 1)
- Improved labeling requirements
- Enhanced training responsibilities
- Stronger requirements for chronic inhalation toxicity, VOC levels
- Prohibited phthalates as a group, 2-butoxyethanol

GS-37 has wide reach

- Green Cleaning regulations in states (NY, IL, ME for schools), municipalities (Santa Monica), US Dept. of Interior
- CA Dept. of General Services EPP Best Practices Manual
- Collaborative for High Performance Schools Best Practices Manual
- Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) – awards points

New attention on health effects of lead

- Lead standards based on toxicity data from 1978
- Evidence* of effects at lower, chronic BLLs; goal: BLLs < 10 ug/dL
 - Hypertension
 - Kidney dysfunction
 - Cognitive dysfunction
 - Adverse reproductive effects

* *Environ Health Perspectives*
115(3), March 2007



Workplace Hazard Alert for lead-exposed workers

- Encourages blood lead testing
- Explains health effects
- Describes what workers can do
 - Cal/OSHA requirements
 - Take-home prevention
 - Info for physicians
- Spanish & employer versions available soon

WORKPLACE HAZARD ALERT

New Health Dangers from Lead



Levels of lead once thought harmless now shown to be toxic

If you work with lead you need to:

- Find out how much lead is in your blood.
- Talk to your doctor about lead and your health.
- Take steps to protect yourself at work.

What health damage can low levels of lead cause?

Studies in recent years show that low levels of lead in adults can:

- **increase blood pressure**— may increase your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.
- **decrease brain function**— making it more difficult to think, learn, and remember.
- **decrease kidney function**— making it more difficult to get rid of toxic waste products through your urine.
- **harm the physical and mental development of your baby** before it's born.
- **increase chances of having a miscarriage.**

Health damage from lead:

- * Can be permanent.
- * Can be occurring even if you have no symptoms.
- * May not show up until many years later.

You may work with lead if you:

- Make or repair radiators
- Make or recycle batteries
- Recycle scrap metal or electronics
- Melt, cast, or grind lead, brass, or bronze
- Make or glaze ceramics
- Work at a shooting range
- Remove paint or coatings
- Remodel homes and buildings
- Tear down buildings, bridges, or tanks

This is not a complete list. If you are unsure if you work with lead, ask your employer.



OLPPP
Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

New bilingual training DVD for residential painters

- Painters, their families exposed to lead paint
- “Lead’s Revenge / La Venganza del Plomo”
- Ladder & lead safety
- Bilingual, no subtitles
- Entertaining, funny!
- Focus group tested
- FREE!*



*Send email to occhealth@cdph.ca.gov

Preventing workplace infectious diseases

- CDPH surveillance triggers workplace investigations; receive inquiries from public
 - Tuberculosis, bovine TB
 - Drug resistant staph (MRSA)
 - Coccidioidomycosis (Valley fever)
 - Exposures to pathogens in labs, via needlesticks
 - Guidance on avian & pandemic influenza
- OHB provided input to proposed **Aerosol Transmissible Diseases** standards

Investigation of Cocci outbreak in trenching crew

- Fungal infection from inhalation of spores in soil in endemic areas
- High attack rate at San Luis Obispo jobsite (10 of 12-person crew)
- No respirators used during soil disturbance
- Severity: symptoms up to substantial lost work time



Cocci prevention recommendations

- Worker & employer education on risk factors, symptoms
- Dust control measures
 - Wetting soil, avoiding work in windy conditions
 - Enclosed, HEPA ventilated cabs
 - Half-mask or N95 respirator, or higher
 - Hygiene measures to limit dust transport offsite
- Physicians to consider cocci in diagnoses involving flu-like symptoms

For more information

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