ThirdCoast Underwriters
Part of the AF Group

Toolbox Talk

Working with Solvents

Hazards of solvents

- Some solvents can break down into acids, poisonous gases or corrosive components if exposed to hot surfaces
- Some solvents can react chemically with other substances
- *All* solvents produce vapors that can cause problems if the concentration gets too high. Excessive exposure to solvent vapor can cause irritation of the eyes, dizziness, nausea, rashes and other skin disorders

Reading the label carefully will prevent accidents

Show sample — the label should contain the following information:

- Determine/identify what solvents employees work with
- Name of product
- Signal word designating degree of hazard (danger, warning or caution)
- Statement of hazards (extremely hazardous, flammable, corrosive)
- Precautionary measures to be taken such as avoid breathing in vapor, keep away from heat or open flame
- Poison sign (skull-and-crossbones), followed by first-aid instructions or antidote in case of exposure/contact

ALWAYS REVIEW MSDS SHEETS FOR SPECIFICS!

General safe procedures for handling solvents

- While using solvents, wear splash-proof chemical goggles — and know where the nearest eye-wash fountain is
- To protect your skin, wear suitable gloves and protective garments where required
- If your clothes become soaked with solvent, remove them and take a shower. Don't put them back on until they're thoroughly dry
- Smoke only in approved areas
- Keep your head back so you won't be in the direct line of escaping vapor
- Wear suitable gloves when using solvents for wiping, dipping, spraying or flushing
- Use soap or mild detergent and water rather than solvents to clean grease, oil, dirt or anything else off your skin
- Place all rags, waste, paper towels soaked with solvent in airtight, all-metal safety containers
- Store and transport small quantities of solvent only in approved, properly marked safety containers
- Ground and bond all metal containers when transferring a flammable solvent from one container to another
- Make sure you have adequate ventilation when you use cold-cleaning solvents in a small room
- Use respiratory equipment where there are solvent vapors. Don't rely on your nose to warn you of excessive concentrations — some toxic vapors have no odor
- Don't do any welding (or allow anyone else to weld) close to areas where solvents are being used. The heat of welding can cause dangerous solvent breakdown conditions, as well as fire or explosion

What to do when someone is overcome by solvent vapors

- Get medical help immediately
- Remove the person to fresh air
- Loosen clothing
- Give artificial respiration if breathing has stopped (if trained)
- Keep patient quiet and warm
- Don't give anything by mouth to an unconscious person

What to do when a spill occurs

- Clean it up as soon as possible, wearing proper protective equipment
- If the solvent can't be reclaimed for further use, put it in a galvanized or stainless steel pail with a tight lid
- Later on, dispose of the solvent safely — don't pour it down a drain

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Topic:

Date:

Presented by:

Organization/Department Name

Attendee Printed Name	Signature

Comments: