



Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 06-0901

SOLVENTS: HAZARDOUS WORKPLACE PRODUCTS

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

A solvent is any substance that will dissolve another substance. Water is an example of a solvent. Many solvents that are used in the workplace have an organic base, as opposed to a water base, and can be hazardous to your health if used improperly. Examples of products that contain toxic, organic solvents are:

Paint thinners (naphthene, toluene)

Degreasers (mineral spirits, petroleum distillates)

Dry cleaning fluids (trichloroethane, petroleum distillates) **Paint brush cleaners** (benzene, toluene, xylene, naphtha)

Oil base paints (mineral spirits, petroleum distillates)

Most organic solvents are poisonous if they are swallowed, their vapors inhaled, or they are absorbed through the skin. Some health effects may be acute and show up immediately; others are chronic and take a long time to appear. Health problems from handling organic based solvents include:

Ingestion: Just a small amount of ingested organic solvents such as benzene, gasoline, mineral spirits, or turpentine can be fatal.

Skin: Most solvents cause skin irritation to some degree, because they dissolve in oils. Solvents can pass through the skin, via absorption and into the bloodstream. This may damage other organs of the body.

Eyes: Solvents, vapors, or splashes of liquid solvent can enter the eye and cause damage or even blindness. Soft contact lens wearers are particularly susceptible because the lens can absorb the chemicals and hold the chemicals against the eye until the lens has been removed.

Lungs: Because solvents evaporate so quickly it is difficult to avoid breathing their vapors. They can cause nose and throat irritation or damage to lung tissue. Solvents can also enter the bloodstream through the lungs, permitting access to other organs in the body.

Liver and Kidney: Prolonged exposure to many solvents can damage the liver and kidneys. These organs remove unwanted chemicals from the bloodstream. But due to their toxicity, some solvents can destroy liver and kidney cells in the process.

Nervous System Disorders: Inhaling almost any solvent cause some degree of nervous system depression. Symptoms include dizziness, headaches, a high feeling, loss of coordination, mental confusion and in severe cases, coma and in severe cases, death.

READ the MSDS sheets before you use new or seldom used chemicals. Recognize the hazards and put in place controls and use the appropriate PPE!

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SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: _____ MEETING DATE: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** _____
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.

5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.

6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.

7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: _____ TIME FINISHED: _____

MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____ TITLE: _____