

P82. FATAL EXPOSURE TO DICHLOROMETHANE IN A PAINT STRIPPER: A PROBLEM OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

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Solvents are commonly used in paint industry. Dichloromethane (DCM) is frequently used as a solvent both in industrial and household products. It is metabolized to carbon monoxide. Although it does not cause serious harm when it is used in well-ventilated places, it may be life-threatening when used in poorly ventilated enclosed places. It is required that appropriate measures should be taken so that DCM related deaths in workers and consumers can be prevented.

A 44-year old male working in a paint factory was reported to be found dead in a paint cauldron when he had his gloves and mask filtrating air. Physical examination performed revealed an increase in the weight of the lungs due to edema, and congestion on the surface and in the pulmonary sections. Macroscopic and microscopic examinations of the other organs did not indicate any pathological conditions. Toxicological examination revealed DCM in circulatory blood, but normal COHb levels (<5%). The worker was reported to die due to asphyxia caused by inhalation of DCM.

Workers exposed to chemicals should be offered education programs about harmful effects of the chemicals and protective measures regularly. Considering the fact that human life is easily vulnerable, new regulations for the use of solvents should be adopted and put into practice to protect workers' health.