



Toolbox Talk

Safe Use of Chemicals – Construction/ Trades

We are exposed to chemicals every day of our lives. Most are harmless, but some can cause us harm if we do not know how to handle them properly.

There are different ways to be exposed to chemicals:

- Ingestion** - Eating or swallowing, either directly, or through contaminated food
- Inhalation** - Breathing harmful dust or fumes
- Absorption** - Chemical entering the body through cuts, etc.

There are a few simple things that you can do to lessen your exposure to chemicals:

- ✔ If using strong solvents, paints, or welding ensure you are using the correct PPE to prevent fume inhalation.
- ✔ Beware of dust. Cement, contaminated ground and hardwood dust (especially if it has been treated chemically) can all cause breathing problems.
- ✔ Be careful of industrial solvents, if you need to dilute them, always add the product to water, not the other way round. Splash back can occur and it is better to be splashed with water, rather than concentrated chemical.
- ✔ Never mix chemicals... You may accidentally produce toxic fumes.
- ✔ If using chemicals in an enclosed space, make sure that there is adequate ventilation.
- ✔ Wear gloves, this can stop you getting chemicals on your hands which can then be passed to your face or ingested if you do not wash it off your hands.

Know What Your Symbols Mean



Toxic
(Acute Toxicity)



Chronic Health
Hazards



Other Health
Hazards

There will usually be more information available on the container as to what the level of danger is, but generally:

- Toxic means it will cause serious illness or death.
- Chronic health hazards related to cancer causing chemicals or anything that will affect reproduction or targets specific organs such as the lung.
- Other health hazards include skin irritation, eye and respiratory inhalation, drowsiness, dizziness, etc.
- These labels will also tell you what to do in the event of exposure.

If you have any concerns about a product you are using, you can ask to see the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Otherwise, you can speak to the Evolve Talent safety team and we will discuss your concerns confidentially with the client.

Summary

- ✔ Lessen your exposure to chemicals where possible
- ✔ Know what the symbols mean
- ✔ Read the information available to you when using chemicals
- ✔ Ask to see the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)