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## OSHA warns about hazards of methylene chloride in new alert

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Washington – OSHA is warning workers of the dangers of methylene chloride after a temporary worker died from exposure to the chemical.

The [hazard alert](#), part of OSHA's [Fatal Facts](#) series, states that the temporary worker was using a common paint stripper to remove bathtub coating in a small bathroom in an apartment building. A window was partially open for ventilation. The solution the worker was using contained 85 percent to 90 percent methylene chloride.

The worker was found unconscious two hours after the project began. His cause of death was determined to be asphyxiation with acute methylene chloride toxicity.

OSHA advises employers to use safer [alternatives](#) to methylene chloride, including water- and vegetable-based products, when available. If a safer alternative is not available, then the agency directs employers to implement the requirements in OSHA's [Methylene Chloride Standard](#), as well as all other applicable OSHA standards to protect workers. To prevent worker fatalities when using methylene chloride paint stripping products, OSHA advises employers to:

- Perform monitoring and air sampling to determine exposure to methylene chloride.
- Establish and implement a respiratory protection program.
- Provide adequate ventilation (bathroom fans or open windows are not considered adequate).
- Provide and maintain effective engineering and work practice controls.
- Provide and enforce the use of proper personal protective equipment.
- Provide essential methylene chloride hazard training to workers.

In other agency news, OSHA has introduced a [magnet](#) featuring information on tractor safety. The triangular magnet is intended to remind tractor operators to avoid making quick or sharp turns; drive slower near ditches, slopes, waterways and manure pits; and turn downhill when necessary. The magnet is available in English or Spanish.