

OSHA issues online tools to reduce chemical exposure

Many workers are at risk for being exposed to dangerous chemicals while working in the United States. Workplaces that use dangerous chemicals are supposed to follow safety regulations and rules issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Unfortunately, OSHA's guidelines for chemical exposure are lacking.

A majority of the hazardous chemical exposure limits issued by OSHA have not been updated since the 1970s. The outdated exposure limits may be putting many workers at risk for suffering workplace injuries caused by working with hazardous chemicals.

To address the risks workers face, OSHA has created two web resources to help protect workers from being exposed to hazardous chemicals. One web resource allows employers and workers to identify chemicals that pose fewer risks in the workplace. This tool will help workplaces make more informed decisions on what chemicals to use and will hopefully create a safer workplace.

The second tool will create a list of permissible exposure limits to keep workers free from unsafe exposure to hazardous chemicals. The list will use the recommendations made from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists.

OSHA said that the new web resources were made to address the fact that their PELs are not sufficient anymore. OSHA hopes that the new tools will help employers and workers be more aware of the dangers of chemical exposure, and understand what steps to take to reduce chemical hazards.

Workplaces should start using the online tools to prevent any

injuries and illnesses caused by hazardous chemicals. Even OSHA admits that their policies are out of date and need to be updated. However, it can take a long time for OSHA to update their policies so they are taking a proactive approach to try and keep workers safe. Employers should take advantage of the new resources as exposure to hazardous chemicals can lead to very serious injuries for workers.

Source: EHS Today, "[With new Web Resources, OSHA Acknowledges that its Chemical Exposure Limits Don't Protect Workers](#)," Josh Cable, Oct. 24, 2013