

Dangerous Chemicals in the Workplace

Nearly every occupation carries some degree of risk for the worker. Construction workers face dangers at jobsites, as so many different types of workers are present and it is difficult for everyone to be on the same page. Those repairing roads have to worry about distracted drivers or equipment failures. Even those working in an office setting may have to be concerned about the potential for injury.

For those who work in occupations that require exposure to harmful chemicals, such as acids or other toxic materials, the dangers are very apparent. Workers need to know what chemicals they will be handling, and what the effects of the chemicals may be. It is crucial that employers pass along safe handling instructions, as without this information, the potential for workplace accidents may increase. While many of these accidents may allow employees to recover workers' compensation benefits, the injuries that may result could be life-changing.

There are steps that workers can take to help stay safe on the job. Employers will have to provide information to employees about some of the effects of the chemicals, but they may not completely know how to safely handle these materials. If possible, test some of the protective materials provided by the employer to determine if they actually do prevent injury from occurring.

Also, workers will want to be sure that these protective materials are still performing as designed. Some defects, like holes, rips or tears, will be very easy to spot. Obviously, those materials will need to be replaced as soon as practical. Any work performed while wearing defective gear is needlessly subjecting an employee to potential injury.

However, some defects may not be that easy to spot. For example, certain protective gear could be very porous, meaning that liquids can travel through them easily, even when in pristine condition. Each chemical and each piece of gear will operate differently, and it is important to be sure that what is being used can prevent the chemicals from causing an injury.

Workers will also want to learn about any long-term health implications that may arise from handling certain chemicals. Silica, familiar to many Pennsylvania workers due to its use in the fracking industry, is linked to silicosis, which can cause lung problems for workers with prolonged exposure to the material.

In many industries, machines have been developed to handle most of the dangerous tasks that are associated with hazardous materials. This could lead to employees being less cautious, believing that they are not likely to be injured by the chemicals present. Workers still need to exercise care around these materials, as an accident could happen at any time.

If you have been injured on the job, speak to an experienced workers' compensation attorney as soon as possible. There are very specific rules in place in order to receive benefits. It is important to follow the proper procedures to ensure that you are able to completely recover from your injuries.