

# Occupational Health Guideline for 1,2-Dichloroethylene

## INTRODUCTION

This guideline is intended as a source of information for employees, employers, physicians, industrial hygienists, and other occupational health professionals who may have a need for such information. It does not attempt to present all data; rather, it presents pertinent information and data in summary form.

## SUBSTANCE IDENTIFICATION

- Formula:  $\text{ClCH}=\text{CHCl}$
- Synonyms: Acetylene dichloride; dioform; trans-acetylene dichloride; sym-dichloroethylene
- Appearance and odor: Colorless liquid with an ether-like, slightly acrid odor, like chloroform.

## PERMISSIBLE EXPOSURE LIMIT (PEL)

The current OSHA standard for 1,2-dichloroethylene is 200 parts of 1,2-dichloroethylene per million parts of air (ppm) averaged over an eight-hour work shift. This may also be expressed as 790 milligrams of 1,2-dichloroethylene per cubic meter of air ( $\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ ).

## HEALTH HAZARD INFORMATION

- Routes of exposure  
1,2-Dichloroethylene can affect the body if it is inhaled or if it comes in contact with the eyes or skin. It can also affect the body if it is swallowed.
- Effects of overexposure  
Exposure to 1,2-dichloroethylene may cause dizziness, drowsiness, and unconsciousness.
- Reporting signs and symptoms  
A physician should be contacted if anyone develops any signs or symptoms and suspects that they are caused by exposure to 1,2-dichloroethylene.
- Recommended medical surveillance  
The following medical procedures should be made available to each employee who is exposed to 1,2-dichloroethylene at potentially hazardous levels:

**1. Initial Medical Screening:** Employees should be screened for history of certain medical conditions (listed below) which might place the employee at increased risk from 1,2-dichloroethylene exposure.

—Liver disease: Although 1,2-dichloroethylene is not known as a liver toxin in humans, the importance of this organ in the biotransformation and detoxification of foreign substances should be considered before exposing persons with impaired liver function.

—Chronic respiratory disease: In persons with impaired pulmonary function, especially those with obstructive airway diseases, the breathing of 1,2-dichloroethylene might cause exacerbation of symptoms due to its irritant properties.

**2. Periodic Medical Examination:** Any employee developing the above-listed conditions should be referred for further medical examination.

### • Summary of toxicology

1,2-Dichloroethylene vapor is a narcotic and a mucous-membrane irritant. Variations in toxicity of the cis- as compared with the trans-form have been reported. A concentration of 39,000 ppm was lethal to guinea pigs, and narcosis was produced at 18,000 ppm. Dogs exposed to high concentrations of vapor developed superficial corneal turbidity which was reversible. No effects were observed in several species with repeated exposure for up to 6 months at 1000 ppm. It has been used as a general anesthetic in man; one industrial fatality was due to very high vapor inhalation in a small enclosure.

## CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

### • Physical data

1. Molecular weight: 96.9
2. Boiling point (760 mm Hg): 45 to 60 C (113 to 140 F)
3. Specific gravity (water = 1): 1.27
4. Vapor density (air = 1 at boiling point of 1,2-dichloroethylene): 3.34
5. Melting point: -49 to -81.5 C (-56 to -115 F)
6. Vapor pressure at 20 C (68 F): 180 to 265 mm Hg

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These recommendations reflect good industrial hygiene and medical surveillance practices and their implementation will assist in achieving an effective occupational health program. However, they may not be sufficient to achieve compliance with all requirements of OSHA regulations.

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Public Health Service Centers for Disease Control  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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Occupational Safety and Health Administration

7. Solubility in water, g/100 g water at 20 C (68 F): 0.35 to 0.63

8. Evaporation rate (butyl acetate = 1): Data not available

- **Reactivity**

1. Conditions contributing to instability: Heat

2. Incompatibilities: Contact with strong oxidizers may cause fires and explosions.

3. Hazardous decomposition products: Toxic gases and vapors (such as hydrogen chloride, phosgene, and carbon monoxide) may be released in a fire involving 1,2-dichloroethylene.

4. Special precautions: 1,2-Dichloroethylene will attack some forms of plastics, rubber, and coatings.

- **Flammability**

1. Flash point: 2.2 to 3.9 C (36 to 39 F) (closed cup)

2. Autoignition temperature: 460 C (860 F) for trans-1,2-dichloroethylene

3. Flammable limits in air, % by volume: Lower: 9.7; Upper: 12.8

4. Extinguishant: Dry chemical, foam, carbon dioxide

- **Warning properties**

May reports an odor threshold of 0.085 ppm for dichloroethylene. For the purposes of this guideline, 1,2-dichloroethylene is treated as a material with adequate warning properties.

1,2-Dichloroethylene is an eye irritant, according to Grant, but the concentrations at which irritation occurs are not mentioned.

## **MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES**

- **General**

Measurements to determine employee exposure are best taken so that the average eight-hour exposure is based on a single eight-hour sample or on two four-hour samples. Several short-time interval samples (up to 30 minutes) may also be used to determine the average exposure level. Air samples should be taken in the employee's breathing zone (air that would most nearly represent that inhaled by the employee).

- **Method**

Sampling and analyses may be performed by collection of 1,2-dichloroethylene vapors using an adsorption tube with subsequent desorption with carbon disulfide and gas chromatographic analysis. Also, detector tubes certified by NIOSH under 42 CFR Part 84 or other direct-reading devices calibrated to measure 1,2-dichloroethylene may be used. An analytical method for 1,2-dichloroethylene is in the *NIOSH Manual of Analytical Methods*, 2nd Ed., Vol. 2, 1977, available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (GPO No. 017-033-00260-6).

## **RESPIRATORS**

- Good industrial hygiene practices recommend that engineering controls be used to reduce environmental concentrations to the permissible exposure level. However, there are some exceptions where respirators may be used to control exposure. Respirators may be used when engineering and work practice controls are not technically feasible, when such controls are in the process of being installed, or when they fail and need to be supplemented. Respirators may also be used for operations which require entry into tanks or closed vessels, and in emergency situations. If the use of respirators is necessary, the only respirators permitted are those that have been approved by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (formerly Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration) or by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

- In addition to respirator selection, a complete respiratory protection program should be instituted which includes regular training, maintenance, inspection, cleaning, and evaluation.

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

- Employees should be provided with and required to use impervious clothing, gloves, face shields (eight-inch minimum), and other appropriate protective clothing necessary to prevent repeated or prolonged skin contact with liquid 1,2-dichloroethylene.

- Clothing wet with liquid 1,2-dichloroethylene should be placed in closed containers for storage until it can be discarded or until provision is made for the removal of 1,2-dichloroethylene from the clothing. If the clothing is to be laundered or otherwise cleaned to remove the 1,2-dichloroethylene, the person performing the operation should be informed of 1,2-dichloroethylene's hazardous properties.

- Any clothing which becomes wet with liquid 1,2-dichloroethylene should be removed immediately and not reworn until the 1,2-dichloroethylene is removed from the clothing.

- Employees should be provided with and required to use splash-proof safety goggles where liquid 1,2-dichloroethylene may contact the eyes.

## **SANITATION**

- Skin that becomes wet with liquid 1,2-dichloroethylene should be promptly washed or showered with soap or mild detergent and water to remove any 1,2-dichloroethylene.

## **COMMON OPERATIONS AND CONTROLS**

The following list includes some common operations in which exposure to 1,2-dichloroethylene may occur and control methods which may be effective in each case:

<b>Operation</b>	<b>Controls</b>
Use as a low-temperature solvent for heat-sensitive substances in extraction of caffeine, perfume oils, and fats from flesh of animals	Local exhaust ventilation; general dilution ventilation; personal protective equipment
Use in rubber and dye industries in extraction and application	Process enclosure; local exhaust ventilation; personal protective equipment
Use as a direct solvent in gums, waxes, oils, camphor, and phenol; use in solvent mixtures for esters and ether derivatives, lacquers, resins, thermoplastics, and artificial fibers	Local exhaust ventilation; general dilution ventilation; personal protective equipment
Use in organic synthesis for polymers and telomers	Process enclosure; local exhaust ventilation; personal protective equipment
Use in miscellaneous applications as liquid dry cleaning agent, cleaning solution for printed circuit boards, food packaging adhesives, and germicidal fumigants	General dilution ventilation; local exhaust ventilation; personal protective equipment

## EMERGENCY FIRST AID PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency, institute first aid procedures and send for first aid or medical assistance.

### • Eye Exposure

If 1,2-dichloroethylene gets into the eyes, wash eyes immediately with large amounts of water, lifting the lower and upper lids occasionally. If irritation is present after washing, get medical attention. Contact lenses should not be worn when working with this chemical.

### • Skin Exposure

If 1,2-dichloroethylene gets on the skin, promptly wash the contaminated skin using soap or mild detergent and water. If 1,2-dichloroethylene soaks through the clothing, remove the clothing promptly and wash the skin using soap or mild detergent and water. If irritation persists after washing, get medical attention.

### • Breathing

If a person breathes in large amounts of 1,2-dichloroethylene, move the exposed person to fresh air at once. If breathing has stopped, perform artificial respiration.

Keep the affected person warm and at rest. Get medical attention as soon as possible.

### • Swallowing

When 1,2-dichloroethylene has been swallowed, get medical attention immediately. If medical attention is not immediately available, get the afflicted person to vomit by having him touch the back of his throat with his finger or by giving him syrup of ipecac as directed on the package. This non-prescription drug is available at most drug stores and drug counters and should be kept with emergency medical supplies in the workplace. Do not make an unconscious person vomit.

### • Rescue

Move the affected person from the hazardous exposure. If the exposed person has been overcome, notify someone else and put into effect the established emergency rescue procedures. Do not become a casualty. Understand the facility's emergency rescue procedures and know the locations of rescue equipment before the need arises.

## SPILL, LEAK, AND DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

• Persons not wearing protective equipment and clothing should be restricted from areas of spills or leaks until cleanup has been completed.

• If 1,2-dichloroethylene is spilled or leaked, the following steps should be taken:

1. Remove all ignition sources.
2. Ventilate area of spill or leak.
3. For small quantities, absorb on paper towels. Evaporate in a safe place (such as a fume hood). Allow sufficient time for evaporating vapors to completely clear the hood ductwork. Burn the paper in a suitable location away from combustible materials. Large quantities can be reclaimed or collected and atomized in a suitable combustion chamber equipped with an appropriate effluent gas cleaning device. 1,2-Dichloroethylene should not be allowed to enter a confined space, such as a sewer, because of the possibility of an explosion. Sewers designed to preclude the formation of explosive concentrations of 1,2-dichloroethylene vapors are permitted.

• Waste disposal method:

1,2-Dichloroethylene may be disposed of by atomizing in a suitable combustion chamber equipped with an appropriate effluent gas cleaning device.

## REFERENCES

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## RESPIRATORY PROTECTION FOR 1,2-DICHLOROETHYLENE

Condition	Minimum Respiratory Protection* Required Above 200 ppm
Vapor Concentration	
1000 ppm or less	A chemical cartridge respirator with a full facepiece and an organic vapor cartridge(s).
4000 ppm or less	A gas mask with a chin-style or a front- or back-mounted organic vapor canister. Any supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece, helmet, or hood. Any self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece.
Greater than 4000 ppm or entry and escape from unknown concentrations	Self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in pressure-demand or other positive pressure mode.  A combination respirator which includes a Type C supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece operated in pressure-demand or other positive pressure or continuous-flow mode and an auxiliary self-contained breathing apparatus operated in pressure-demand or other positive pressure mode.
Fire Fighting	Self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in pressure-demand or other positive pressure mode.
Escape	Any gas mask providing protection against organic vapors. Any escape self-contained breathing apparatus.

\*Only NIOSH-approved or MSHA-approved equipment should be used.