

WHY YOU REALLY NEED TO SEE THESE WORDS...

“STYRENE FREE”

CLEARLY MARKED ON THE LABEL OF YOUR FLOOR FINISH!



WHAT IS STYRENE, HOW IS IT USED, AND HOW MIGHT I BE EXPOSED?

Styrene (also called vinylbenzene) is a flammable, oily liquid. It is colorless to yellowish in color and has a penetrating odor. Styrene does not occur naturally. Cigarette smoke and automobile exhaust contain small amounts of styrene. Styrene is produced in very large amounts by nine companies in the United States. The largest users of styrene are chemical companies that make plastics, synthetic rubber, resins (used in floor finishes), and insulators.

HOW DOES STYRENE AFFECT HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

Effects of styrene on human health and the environment depend on how much styrene is present and the length and frequency of exposure. Effects also depend on the health of a person or the condition of the environment when exposure occurs.

Acute (short-term) exposure to styrene in humans results in **mucous membrane and eye irritation, gastrointestinal effects.**

Chronic (long-term) exposure to styrene in humans results in effects on **central nervous system (CNS), such as headache, fatigue, weakness, and depression; peripheral neuropathy, and minor effects on some kidney enzyme function and on the blood.**

Styrene vapor irritates the eyes, the nose, and the throat. Styrene vapor can also adversely affect the human nervous system, causing adverse eye effects. These effects are not likely to occur at levels of styrene that are normally found in the environment. Human effects associated with breathing small amounts of styrene over long periods of time in the workplace include alterations in vision, hearing loss and increased reaction times. Several epidemiologic studies suggest there may be an association between styrene exposure and an increased risk of leukemia and lymphoma. However, the evidence is inconclusive due to confounding factors. Animal studies have produced both negative and positive results. **The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified styrene as a Group 2B, possible human carcinogen. EPA's office of Research and Development has updates previous assessments on the carcinogenic potential of styrene and concluded that styrene is appropriately classified in Group C, "possible human carcinogen".** The EPA is currently reviewing the potential of styrene to cause cancer.