Common Name: ACETALDEHYDE

CAS Number:    75-07-0
DOT Number:    UN 1089

HAZARD SUMMARY
* Acetaldehyde can affect you when breathed in.
* Acetaldehyde should be handled as a CARCINOGEN and a TERATOGEN--WITH EXTREME CAUTION.
* Acetaldehyde can irritate the skin causing a rash or burning feeling on contact.
* Acetaldehyde can irritate and cause severe eye burns, leading to permanent damage.
* Breathing Acetaldehyde can irritate the nose and throat.
* Breathing Acetaldehyde can irritate the lungs causing coughing and/or shortness of breath. Higher exposure can cause a build-up of fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema), a medical emergency, with severe shortness of breath.
* Exposure to high concentrations can cause you to feel sleepy, dizzy, lightheaded, and to pass out.
* Acetaldehyde may cause a skin allergy.
* Acetaldehyde is a HIGHLY FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE chemical and is a DANGEROUS FIRE and EXPLOSION HAZARD.

IDENTIFICATION
Acetaldehyde is a colorless liquid or gas with a strong fruity odor. It is used to manufacture many other chemicals.

REASON FOR CITATION
* Acetaldehyde is on the Hazardous Substance List because it is regulated by OSHA and cited by ACGIH, DEP, DOT, HHAG, NFPA, EPA, NIOSH, IARC and NTP.
* This chemical is on the Special Health Hazard Substance List because it is a CARCINOGEN, FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE.
* Definitions are provided on page 5.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE BEING EXPOSED
The New Jersey Right to Know Act requires most employers to label chemicals in the workplace and requires public employers to provide their employees with information and training concerning chemical hazards and controls. The federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, 1910.1200, requires private employers to provide similar training and information to their employees.

WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMITS
OSHA: The legal airborne permissible exposure limit (PEL) is 200 ppm averaged over an 8-hour workshift.
NIOSH: Recommends that exposure to occupational carcinogens be limited to the lowest feasible concentration.
ACGIH: The recommended airborne exposure limit is 25 ppm which should not be exceeded at any time.

WAYS OF REDUCING EXPOSURE
* Enclose operations and use local exhaust ventilation at the site of chemical release. If local exhaust ventilation or enclosure is not used, respirators should be worn.
* Wear protective work clothing.
* Wash thoroughly immediately after exposure to Acetaldehyde and at the end of the workshift.
* Post hazard and warning information in the work area. In addition, as part of an ongoing education and training effort, communicate all information on the health and safety hazards of Acetaldehyde to potentially exposed workers.

* Exposure to hazardous substances should be routinely evaluated. This may include collecting air samples. Under OSHA 1910.20, you have a legal right to obtain copies of sampling results from your employer.
* If you think you are experiencing any work-related health problems, see a doctor trained to recognize occupational diseases. Take this Fact Sheet with you.
* ODOR THRESHOLD = 0.067 ppm.
* The range of accepted odor threshold values is quite broad. Caution should be used in relying on odor alone as a warning of potentially hazardous exposures.
This Fact Sheet is a summary source of information of all potential and most severe health hazards that may result from exposure. Duration of exposure, concentration of the substance and other factors will affect your susceptibility to any of the potential effects described below.

HEALTH HAZARD INFORMATION

Acute Health Effects
The following acute (short-term) health effects may occur immediately or shortly after exposure to Acetaldehyde:

* Acetaldehyde can irritate the skin causing a rash or burning feeling on contact.
* Acetaldehyde can irritate and cause severe eye burns.
* Breathing Acetaldehyde can irritate the nose and throat.
* Breathing Acetaldehyde can irritate the lungs causing coughing and/or shortness of breath. Higher exposure can cause a build-up of fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema), a medical emergency, with severe shortness of breath.
* Exposure to high concentrations can cause you to feel sleepy, dizzy, lightheaded, and to pass out.

Chronic Health Effects
The following chronic (long-term) health effects can occur at some time after exposure to Acetaldehyde and can last for months or years:

Cancer Hazard
* Acetaldehyde may be a CARCINOGEN in humans since it has been shown to cause nose cancer in animals.
* Many scientists believe there is no safe level of exposure to a carcinogen.

Reproductive Hazard
* Acetaldehyde may be a TERATOGEN in humans since it has been shown to be a teratogen in animals.

Other Long-Term Effects
* Acetaldehyde may cause a skin allergy. If allergy develops, very low future exposure can cause itching and a skin rash.
* Repeated exposure may cause chronic irritation of the eyes leading to permanent damage.

MEDICAL

Medical Testing
For those with frequent or potentially high exposure (half the TLV or greater), the following are recommended before beginning work and at regular times after that:

* Lung function tests.

If symptoms develop or overexposure is suspected, the following may be useful:

* Evaluation by a qualified allergist, including careful exposure history and special testing, may help diagnose skin allergy.
* Consider chest x-ray after acute overexposure.

Any evaluation should include a careful history of past and present symptoms with an exam. Medical tests that look for damage already done are not a substitute for controlling exposure.

Request copies of your medical testing. You have a legal right to this information under OSHA 1910.20.

WORKPLACE CONTROLS AND PRACTICES

Unless a less toxic chemical can be substituted for a hazardous substance, ENGINEERING CONTROLS are the most effective way of reducing exposure. The best protection is to enclose operations and/or provide local exhaust ventilation at the site of chemical release. Isolating operations can also reduce exposure. Using respirators or protective equipment is less effective than the controls mentioned above, but is sometimes necessary.

In evaluating the controls present in your workplace, consider: (1) how hazardous the substance is, (2) how much of the substance is released into the workplace and (3) whether harmful skin or eye contact could occur. Special controls should be in place for highly toxic chemicals or when significant skin, eye, or breathing exposures are possible.

In addition, the following controls are recommended:

* Where possible, automatically pump liquid Acetaldehyde from drums or other storage containers to process containers.
* Before entering a confined space where Acetaldehyde may be present, check to make sure that an explosive concentration does not exist.
* Use Acetaldehyde in closed systems with an “inert blanket.”

Good WORK PRACTICES can help to reduce hazardous exposures. The following work practices are recommended:

* Workers whose clothing has been contaminated by Acetaldehyde should change into clean clothing promptly.
* Do not take contaminated work clothes home. Family members could be exposed.
* Contaminated work clothes should be laundered by individuals who have been informed of the hazards of exposure to Acetaldehyde.
* Eye wash fountains should be provided in the immediate work area for emergency use.
* If there is the possibility of skin exposure, emergency shower facilities should be provided.
* On skin contact with Acetaldehyde, immediately wash or shower to remove the chemical. At the end of the workshift, wash any areas of the body that may have contacted Acetaldehyde, whether or not known skin contact has occurred.  
* Do not eat, smoke, or drink where Acetaldehyde is handled, processed, or stored, since the chemical can be swallowed. Wash hands carefully before eating or smoking.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

WORKPLACE CONTROLS ARE BETTER THAN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT. However, for some jobs (such as outside work, confined space entry, jobs done only once in a while, or jobs done while workplace controls are being installed), personal protective equipment may be appropriate.

OSHA 1910.132 requires employers to determine the appropriate personal protective equipment for each hazard and to train employees on how and when to use protective equipment.

The following recommendations are only guidelines and may not apply to every situation.

Clothing
* Avoid skin contact with Acetaldehyde. Wear protective gloves and clothing. Safety equipment suppliers/manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove/clothing material for your operation.  
* All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.  
* ACGIH recommends Butyl Rubber as a protective material.

Eye Protection
* Wear splash-proof chemical goggles and face shield when working with liquid, unless full facepiece respiratory protection is worn.  
* Wear gas-proof goggles and face shield, unless full facepiece respiratory protection is worn.  
* Contact lenses should not be worn when working with this substance.

Respiratory Protection
IMPROPER USE OF RESPIRATORS IS DANGEROUS. Such equipment should only be used if the employer has a written program that takes into account workplace conditions, requirements for worker training, respirator fit testing and medical exams, as described in OSHA 1910.134.

* Where the potential exists for exposure over 25 ppm, use a MSHA/NIOSH approved supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode. For increased protection use in combination with an auxiliary self-contained breathing apparatus operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode.

* Exposure to 2,000 ppm is immediately dangerous to life and health. If the possibility of exposure above 2,000 ppm exists, use a MSHA/NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive pressure mode.

HANDLING AND STORAGE

* Prior to working with Acetaldehyde you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.  
* Acetaldehyde is not compatible with STRONG OXIDIZERS, ACIDS, ALCOHOLS, AMMONIA, AMINES, PHENOLS, KETONES, ACID ANHYDRIDES and HALOGENS.  
* Acetaldehyde reacts violently with ANHYDROUS AMMONIA, HYDROGEN CYANIDE, HYDROGEN SULFIDE and ALKALINE materials (such as SODIUM HYDROXIDE).  
* Acetaldehyde reacts with air to form unstable PEROXIDES which can explode.  
* Store in tightly closed airtight containers in a cool, dark, well-ventilated area.  
* Nitrogen or another inert gas should be used as a "blanket" over liquid Acetaldehyde in storage containers.  
* Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where Acetaldehyde is handled, used, or stored.  
* Metal containers involving the transfer of Acetaldehyde should be grounded and bonded. Drums must be equipped with self-closing valves, pressure vacuum bungs, and flame arresters.  
* Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of Acetaldehyde.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: If I have acute health effects, will I later get chronic health effects?  
A: Not always. Most chronic (long-term) effects result from repeated exposures to a chemical.

Q: Can I get long-term effects without ever having short-term effects?  
A: Yes, because long-term effects can occur from repeated exposures to a chemical at levels not high enough to make you immediately sick.

Q: What are my chances of getting sick when I have been exposed to chemicals?  
A: The likelihood of becoming sick from chemicals is increased as the amount of exposure increases. This is determined by the length of time and the amount of material to which someone is exposed.
Q: When are higher exposures more likely?
A: Conditions which increase risk of exposure include physical and mechanical processes (heating, pouring, spraying, spills and evaporation from large surface areas such as open containers), and "confined space" exposures (working inside vats, reactors, boilers, small rooms, etc.).

Q: Is the risk of getting sick higher for workers than for community residents?
A: Yes. Exposures in the community, except possibly in cases of fires or spills, are usually much lower than those found in the workplace. However, people in the community may be exposed to contaminated water as well as to chemicals in the air over long periods. Because of this, and because of exposure of children or people who are already ill, community exposures may cause health problems.

Q: Don't all chemicals cause cancer?
A: No. Most chemicals tested by scientists are not cancer-causing.

Q: Should I be concerned if a chemical causes cancer in animals?
A: Yes. Most scientists agree that a chemical that causes cancer in animals should be treated as a suspected human carcinogen unless proven otherwise.

Q: But don't they test animals using much higher levels of a chemical than people usually are exposed to?
A: Yes. That's so effects can be seen more clearly using fewer animals. But high doses alone don't cause cancer unless it's a cancer agent. In fact, a chemical that causes cancer in animals at high doses could cause cancer in humans exposed to low doses.

Q: Can men as well as women be affected by chemicals that cause reproductive system damage?
A: Yes. Some chemicals reduce potency or fertility in both men and women. Some damage sperm and eggs, possibly leading to birth defects.

Q: Who is at the greatest risk from reproductive hazards?
A: Pregnant women are at greatest risk from chemicals that harm the developing fetus. However, chemicals may affect the ability to have children, so both men and women of childbearing age are at high risk.

Q: Should I be concerned if a chemical is a teratogen in animals?
A: Yes. Although some chemicals may affect humans differently than they affect animals, damage to animals suggests that similar damage can occur in humans.

The following information is available from:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Occupational Disease and Injury Services
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
(609) 984-1863

Industrial Hygiene Information
Industrial hygienists are available to answer your questions regarding the control of chemical exposures using exhaust ventilation, special work practices, good housekeeping, good hygiene practices, and personal protective equipment including respirators. In addition, they can help to interpret the results of industrial hygiene survey data.

Medical Evaluation
If you think you are becoming sick because of exposure to chemicals at your workplace, you may call a Department of Health and Senior Services physician who can help you find the services you need.

Public Presentations
Presentations and educational programs on occupational health or the Right to Know Act can be organized for labor unions, trade associations and other groups.

Right to Know Information Resources
The Right to Know Infoline (609) 984-2202 can answer questions about the identity and potential health effects of chemicals, list of educational materials in occupational health, references used to prepare the Fact Sheets, preparation of the Right to Know survey, education and training programs, labeling requirements, and general information regarding the Right to Know Act. Violations of the law should be reported to (609) 984-2202.
DEFINITIONS

**ACGIH** is the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. It recommends upper limits (called TLVs) for exposure to workplace chemicals.

A **carcinogen** is a substance that causes cancer.

The **CAS number** is assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service to identify a specific chemical.

A **combustible** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that will burn.

A **corrosive** substance is a gas, liquid or solid that causes irreversible damage to human tissue or containers.

**DEP** is the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

**DOT** is the Department of Transportation, the federal agency that regulates the transportation of chemicals.

**EPA** is the Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency responsible for regulating environmental hazards.

A **fetus** is an unborn human or animal.

A **flammable** substance is a solid, liquid, vapor or gas that will ignite easily and burn rapidly.

The **flash point** is the temperature at which a liquid or solid gives off vapor that can form a flammable mixture with air.

**HHAG** is the Human Health Assessment Group of the federal EPA.

**IARC** is the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a scientific group that classifies chemicals according to their cancer-causing potential.

A **miscible** substance is a liquid or gas that will evenly dissolve in another.

**mg/m^3** means milligrams of a chemical in a cubic meter of air. It is a measure of concentration (weight/volume).

**MSHA** is the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the federal agency that regulates mining. It also evaluates and approves respirators.

A **mutagen** is a substance that causes mutations. A **mutation** is a change in the genetic material in a body cell. Mutations can lead to birth defects, miscarriages, or cancer.

**NAERG** is the North American Emergency Response Guidebook. It was jointly developed by Transport Canada, the United States Department of Transportation and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation of Mexico. It is a guide for first responders to quickly identify the specific or generic hazards of material involved in a transportation incident, and to protect themselves and the general public during the initial response phase of the incident.

**NCI** is the National Cancer Institute, a federal agency that determines the cancer-causing potential of chemicals.

**NFPA** is the National Fire Protection Association. It classifies substances according to their fire and explosion hazard.

**NIOSH** is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It tests equipment, evaluates and approves respirators, conducts studies of workplace hazards, and proposes standards to OSHA.

**NTP** is the National Toxicology Program which tests chemicals and reviews evidence for cancer.

**OSHA** is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards.

**PEOSHA** is the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, a state law which sets PELs for New Jersey public employees.

**ppm** means parts of a substance per million parts of air. It is a measure of concentration by volume in air.

A **reactive** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that releases energy under certain conditions.

A **teratogen** is a substance that causes birth defects by damaging the fetus.

**TLV** is the Threshold Limit Value, the workplace exposure limit recommended by ACGIH.

The **vapor pressure** is a measure of how readily a liquid or a solid mixes with air at its surface. A higher vapor pressure indicates a higher concentration of the substance in air and therefore increases the likelihood of breathing it in.
**Common Name:** ACETALDEHYDE  
**DOT Number:** UN 1089  
**NAERG Code:** 129  
**CAS Number:** 75-07-0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard rating</th>
<th>NJDHSS</th>
<th>NFPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLAMMABILITY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REACTIVITY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Carcinogen**  
**Explosive gas or liquid**  
**Poisonous gases are produced in fire**

**Hazard Rating Key:** 0=minimal; 1=slight; 2=moderate; 3=serious; 4=severe

**FIRE HAZARDS**  
* Acetaldehyde is a FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE LIQUID or GAS.  
* Acetaldehyde vapor forms EXPLOSIVE mixtures with AIR.  
  * Use dry chemical, CO₂, or alcohol foam extinguishers.  
  * Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.  
  * POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE.  
  * The vapor is heavier than air and may travel a distance to cause a fire or explosion far from the source.  
  * If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in OSHA 1910.156.

**SPILLS AND EMERGENCIES**

If liquid Acetaldehyde is spilled or leaked, take the following steps:

* Evacuate persons not wearing protective equipment from area of spill or leak until clean-up is complete.  
* Remove all ignition sources.  
* Ventilate area of spill or leak.  
* Absorb liquids in vermiculite, dry sand, earth, or a similar material and deposit in sealed containers.

If Acetaldehyde gas is leaked, take the following steps:

* Evacuate persons not wearing protective equipment from area of leak until clean-up is complete.  
* Remove all ignition sources.  
* Ventilate area of leak to disperse the gas.  
* Stop flow of gas. If source of leak is a cylinder and the leak cannot be stopped in place, remove the leaking cylinder to a safe place in the open air, and repair leak or allow cylinder to empty.  
* Keep liquid Acetaldehyde out of a confined space, such as a sewer, because of the possibility of an explosion, unless the sewer is designed to prevent the build-up of explosive concentrations.  
* It may be necessary to contain and dispose of liquid Acetaldehyde as a HAZARDOUS WASTE. Contact your Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or your regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for specific recommendations.

---

**FIRST AID**

* If employees are required to clean-up spills, they must be properly trained and equipped. OSHA 1910.120(q) may be applicable.

**HANDLING AND STORAGE** (See page 3)

**PHYSICAL DATA**

* **Vapor Pressure:** 740 mm Hg at 68°F (20°C)  
* **Flash Point:** -36°F (-38°C)  
* **Water Solubility:** Miscible

**OTHER COMMONLY USED NAMES**

* **Chemical Name:** Ethyl Aldehyde  
* **Other Names:** Acetic Aldehyde; Ethanal

---

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Right to Know Program  
PO Box 368, Trenton, NJ 08625-0368  
(609) 984-2202

---

Not intended to be copied and sold for commercial purposes.