

## Guidance Note 2024.05.01: Methylene Chloride Reclassification

### INTRODUCTION

Methylene chloride, also known as dichloromethane, is a chemical compound commonly used in the signage industry for bonding acrylic materials and other applications such as nylon locators to acrylic letters, it's likely to be a controlled substance by 2025.

Recent regulatory actions have prompted a declassification of methylene chloride due to concerns about its health and environmental risks.

This guideline aims to inform businesses in the signage industry about the reclassification and provide recommendations for safe handling and disposal of methylene chloride.

### KEY POINTS

#### *Reclassification Status:*

Methylene chloride has been reclassified by regulatory authorities due to its potential health hazards, including carcinogenicity and neurological effects. The reclassification may result in tighter regulations, restrictions on use, or recommendations for safer alternatives.

#### *Health and Safety Risks:*

Inhalation or skin exposure to methylene chloride vapours or liquid can pose serious health risks, including irritation, central nervous system depression, and long-term health effects such as cancer.

It is essential to prioritise the safety of workers by implementing appropriate controls and precautions when handling methylene chloride.

#### *Safe Handling Practices:*

- ✓ Use methylene chloride in well-ventilated areas to minimize exposure to vapours.
- ✓ Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, goggles, and respiratory protection, when handling methylene chloride.

- ✓ Avoid direct contact with skin or inhalation of vapours. If contact occurs, immediately rinse affected areas with water and seek medical attention if necessary.
- ✓ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for storage, handling, and disposal of methylene chloride-containing products

*Disposal Guidelines:*

- ✓ Dispose of methylene chloride waste per local regulations and guidelines set forth by environmental protection agencies.
- ✓ Consider recycling or reusing methylene chloride waste if feasible and appropriate.
- ✓ Engage professional waste management services for the safe disposal of methylene chloride and other hazardous substances.
- ✓ Ensure that containers or packaging containing methylene chloride are properly labelled with hazard information and handled with care to prevent spills or leaks.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Explore Safer Alternatives:*

- Consider transitioning to safer alternatives, such as methyl methacrylate (MMA) based adhesives, which offer comparable bonding capabilities with lower health and environmental risks.
- Evaluate the performance and suitability of alternative products for specific applications in the signage industry.

*Training and Awareness:*

- Provide training to workers on the health hazards of methylene chloride and safe handling practices.
- Raise awareness among employees about the reclassification of methylene chloride and the importance of compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Continuous Monitoring and Improvement:
- Regularly review and update safety procedures and protocols based on emerging regulatory changes and advancements in safer technologies.
- Encourage feedback from employees regarding safety concerns and suggestions for improvement.

*Alignment with COSHH Regulations:*

This guideline is designed to assist businesses in complying with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations.

By following the recommendations outlined in this guidance, employers can effectively manage the risks associated with methylene chloride exposure in the workplace, conduct appropriate risk assessments, implement control measures, provide necessary training and information to employees, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

## **CONCLUSION**

The reclassification of methylene chloride underscores the importance of prioritising health and safety in the signage industry. By adhering to safe handling practices, exploring safer alternatives, and staying informed about regulatory changes, businesses can minimise risks to signage workers and the environment while maintaining operational efficiency.

For further guidance and assistance, consult with regulatory authorities, industry associations, or professional safety advisors.

For more information, refer to:

<https://www.chlorinated-solvents.eu/news/reclassification-proposal-for-methylene-chloride-open-for-public-consultation-until-17-november-2023>