

What you should know about Trichloroethylene (TCE)

New EPA assessments and Slide Products' decision to eliminate all chlorinated solvents

On September 28, 2011, the EPA issued their "final health assessment" for trichloroethylene (TCE), one of the most widely used chlorinated solvents nationwide, to the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS.) It states:

"The final assessment characterizes the chemical as carcinogenic to humans..."

What does this mean?

This assessment has already made an impact on our industry. While some aerosol manufacturers have kept TCE in their formulations, the solvent's availability has become very limited. Dow, for example, no longer makes TCE accessible to our industry while PPG has chosen to significantly raise its price and limit its availability. This in turn has driven up costs and resulted in higher prices for molders and mold makers who use products like mold cleaners, which contain TCE as a solvent.

Slide Products believes that the final EPA assessment is the beginning of an inevitable phase-out of TCE from our industry, and molders and mold makers need to re-evaluate the products they use in manufacturing. We also believe that other aerosol manufacturers need to start the process now for finding safe, effective alternatives to the mold releases, mold cleaners, rust preventives, lubricants and other products you use.

What can you do?

To eliminate TCE from your operation, molders like you should take a hard look at all the aerosols and chemicals used in their manufacturing and cleaning and mold maintenance processes. It's not as simple as looking at the product label, however. Unlike consumer products, industrial aerosols and chemicals are not subject to the same regulations and requirements and will most likely NOT show ingredients on their label.

You need to review the MSDS kept on file at your company for each product, and/or contact the manufacturer to determine if formulation you're using contains TCE or other chlorinated solvents.

What alternatives do you have?

There are several solvent alternatives similar to TCE currently

A little "chlorinated" history

Over the past few decades our industry has been required to make several formulation changes as a result of new research and regulations. CFC's (chlorofluorocarbons) were eliminated in the 1980's over concerns they were harmful to our environment and the ozone layer.

In the late 1980's the solvent 1,1,1-trichlorethane was determined to be a factor in depleting the ozone layer. In 1989, the Montreal Protocol, effectively eliminated the use of this solvent worldwide.

In the mid 1990's OSHA changed its exposure guidelines for methylene chloride solvents. Though not specifically stating methylene chloride was a safety hazard, OSHA's guidelines for exposure to the solvent were so strict, and the financial impact so significant, that companies chose to eliminate its use and avoid all the additional costs.

Trichloroethylene (TCE), one of the most common man-made chemicals found in our environment, is a widely used chlorinated solvent and is frequently found at Superfund sites across the country. The final EPA assessment, in our view, is the beginning of a phase-out of this chemical.

being used in aerosol and chemical formulations. They include:

1) Perchloroethylene (PERC). The most popular solvent in the dry cleaning process, PERC is also being used by some product manufacturers in the molding and mold-making industry. Though PERC's benefits are similar to those of TCE, OSHA standards and guidelines limit workers' exposure to the solvent in order to minimize health hazards.

2) Toluene. Used far less frequently as a solvent, toluene is a clear, colorless liquid with a strong, sweet, pungent odor. You may recognize its distinctive scent in paint thinner, fingernail polish, spot removers, lacquers, adhesives, rubber and antifreeze.

Inhaling high levels of toluene, however, can be extremely dangerous. Repeatedly breathing toluene over long periods of time can cause death, permanent brain damage, unconsciousness or depression.

3) Chlorine-free solvents. There are effective alternative solvents that have no known health or

environmental issues. Slide Products made the decision to eliminate chlorinated solvents from our products in July 2011, well before the EPA assessment was made public.

By proactively eliminating TCE from the few products in our line that had this solvent, and not using any chlorinated solvents of any kind, we've eliminated the questions and guesswork involved in selecting products that are safe, effective and better for the work environment.

You can be sure that Slide Products' entire line of products – mold releases, mold cleaners, rust preventives, lubricants, purges and more – have no chlorinated solvents. None.

If you are using Slide's products, you are already transitioned to better formulations. If you are using other products, and need assistance determining if their formulations have TCE or any other chlorinated solvents, please contact your local Slide distributor, or contact Slide Products directly at 1-800-323-6433, 1-847-541-7220, or email us at info@slideproducts.com.

The logo for Slide Products, featuring the word "SLIDE" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. The letter "S" is stylized with a horizontal line extending to the left. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of the word.

Better For You. Better For The Environment. Better For Your Bottom Line.