

WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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Job Name _____

Date _____

ASPHALT FUMES

Asphalt is a black, sticky material produced from crude oil. Construction workers use it for paving highways, patching potholes, roofing, and waterproofing. It's important to be aware of the hazards involved when working with asphalt as well as the chemicals mixed with it, such as solvents, binding agents, and hardening agents. When asphalt is heated, it can reach temperatures of over 450 degrees. Along with burn hazards, asphalt also presents fire and explosion hazards. However, the focus of today's Weekly Safety Meeting is asphalt fumes and what you can do to protect yourself from the possible health effects and dangers associated with them.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, over a half-million workers are exposed to fumes from asphalt. Dangerous gases, vapors, and fumes are created when asphalt becomes hot. Health effects from exposure to asphalt fumes include eye, nose, and throat irritation, skin rash, headache, nausea, fatigue, and drowsiness; in extreme cases convulsions, coma, and even death can occur. If you inhale asphalt fumes repeatedly, you can suffer from bronchitis, emphysema, and lung cancer. The chemicals in asphalt products can also damage your liver, kidneys, and nervous system.

OSHA does not have a specific standard for asphalt fumes. However, when working with or near asphalt, you can protect yourself by wearing the necessary personal protective equipment, working safely, and following personal hygiene practices. Read the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for any asphalt product before you use it. The MSDS can refresh your memory about safe means of using and handling the materials. If required, wear the right type of respirator for the job. Make sure you know how to use it and that it fits comfortably. You should also wear heat-resistant gloves, coveralls, safety shoes, and a face shield. Whenever possible, reduce your exposure to asphalt fumes. Stand upwind from asphalt activities and try not to work in enclosed areas. Use the available ventilation systems on equipment to reduce asphalt fumes.

Keep fire extinguishers handy. If any asphalt gets on your skin or in your eyes, flush the area with cold water to stop further damage. Seek professional help immediately. To avoid contamination, never eat, drink, or smoke near asphalt. Wash your hands before you eat and before you leave the jobsite. You should also change out of your work clothes before going home, and shower as soon as possible.

SAFETY REMINDER

**Roadway or roofing work can expose you
to extreme temperatures and direct sunlight.
Stay hydrated and watch for symptoms of heat illness.**

Special Topics For Your Project _____

Employee Safety Recommendations _____

S.A.F.E. Cards® planned for this week _____

Reviewed MSDS # _____

Subject _____

Meeting Attended By _____

Supervisor's Signature _____

These instructions do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations.