

WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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Job Name _____

Date _____

VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS

A volatile organic compound (VOC) is any carbon-based chemical substance that easily evaporates or becomes airborne as it dries. VOCs are found in many construction materials including paints, thinners, adhesives, sealants, caulks, and plastics. These products can release VOCs while you are using them as well as when they are stored. It's important that you're aware of the hazards you are exposed to when working with products containing VOCs and that you learn how to protect yourself from these dangers.

You must carefully read the label and review the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for any product containing VOCs. You might find the following cautions: "WARNING! HARMFUL IF INHALED OR ABSORBED THROUGH THE SKIN," or "MAY CAUSE ALLERGIC RESPIRATORY OR SKIN REACTION." The health effects of working with substances containing VOCs include eye, nose, and throat irritation; headaches; dizziness; nausea; and damage to organs and the central nervous system. An MSDS can outline what kind of personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary to work safely with the material. VOCs are typically flammable, which means that as liquids or vapors they will ignite easily and burn rapidly. You should never smoke while using these products.

To reduce your exposure, keep in mind the following safe practices when using products that emit VOCs:

- # Increase ventilation and allow for the maximum amount of fresh air.
- # Wear rubber-lined or plastic gloves to avoid contact with your skin (see the MSDS for glove details).
- # Use the necessary respiratory protection and eye protection.
- # Keep individual containers closed when not in use.
- # Store products with VOCs only in approved containers in areas where smoking is prohibited.
- # Dispose of containers and unused substances appropriately as outlined in the material safety data sheet.
- # Know what to do in case of a spill.

Whenever possible, select construction materials with the lowest VOC content, or use a no-VOC alternative. Like everything else on the job, working with construction materials that emit VOCs requires knowledge, planning, and a high regard for safety.

**VOCs also present hazards for the environment.
Large concentrations of VOCs can negatively affect
ecosystems and public health.**

SAFETY REMINDER

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.