



HEALTH, SAFETY,
& ENVIRONMENTAL



Alert #: SA 51-26

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Chemical Exposure During Surface Preparation

During surface preparation, a paint crew determined that pressure washing alone was not effectively removing surface contaminants. The crew transitioned to manually applying an approved detergent, Purple Strike Rig Wash-OXY SB, using cloths and scrub brushes while wearing nitrile gloves specified by the product manufacturer. Both the detergent and gloves were approved for use onsite. A short while after manually applying the detergent, an employee reported discomfort on the back of his left hand. Work was stopped immediately; the employee removed his glove and flushed the affected area with potable water before being evaluated by the onsite Medic and transported for further assessment. Medical evaluation determined that the employee sustained a minor chemical burn. The employee was treated and released to work without restrictions. Stop Work Authority was exercised, and use of the detergent was suspended pending investigation.

What Happened?

The investigation determined that while the detergent and nitrile gloves had been routinely used onsite without previous incidents, the change from pressure washing to manual chemical application introduced additional exposure potential that was not fully evaluated through the hazard assessment process. This associated SDS was not attached to the JSEA or permit, and chemical handling requirements were not specifically reviewed during pre-job planning. The investigation also identified that an alternative nitrile glove containing internal flocking was used during the task. While the impact of the glove construction has not been conclusively determined, compatibility between the chemical and the selected PPE had not been specifically evaluated during task planning.

Key Lessons Learned:

A change in work method is a change in risk.

Even when approved materials, chemicals, and PPE are being used, crews must stop and reassess hazards whenever:

- Work methods change from the original plan.
- Chemicals are introduced or applied differently than originally intended.
- Alternative PPE is selected.
- Tasks evolve beyond the scope covered by the original JSEA or Permit.

Past success with a process should never replace a fresh evaluation of current hazards. A task performed safely many times can still present new risks when conditions or methods change.

Critical Controls

Before handling chemicals:

- ✓ Review the SDS and manufacturer instructions. ✓ Verify required PPE and chemical compatibility.
- ✓ Ensure SDS documents are readily available to all personnel. ✓ Discuss chemical hazards during the pre-job meeting. ✓ Confirm emergency response and decontamination procedures. ✓ Update Permits and JSEAs when work methods, materials, or processes change. ✓ Stop work and seek guidance if hazards are unclear or conditions change.

What Went Right?

Employee immediately reported symptoms → Coworkers initiated first aid measures → Stop Work Authority was exercised → Medical evaluation was obtained promptly → Work activities were suspended pending investigation. These actions helped prevent a more serious outcome and demonstrate our commitment to protecting people and intervening when conditions change.

Key Takeaway:

In this incident, the hazard changed when the work method changed.

- **Changes in work scope require a fresh hazard assessment.**
- **SDS review and chemical-specific planning must occur before use.**
- **Verify PPE compatibility, not just PPE availability.**

Proper use of the **GIS LIFE Processes** can help to create a **FAIL-SAFE** Work Environment



SAFETY ALERT

