



# Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet

Common Name: **1,2-DIHYDROXYBENZENE**

Synonyms: Catechol; o-Dihydroxybenzene; Pyrocatechol

Chemical Name: 1,2-Benzenediol

Date: December 1999    Revision: January 2009

CAS Number: 120-80-9

RTK Substance Number: 0722

DOT Number: UN 2811

## Description and Use

**1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is a colorless, crystalline (sand-like) solid with a slight *Phenolic* odor. **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** becomes a vapor at ordinary temperatures. It is used in the photographic, rubber, dye, fat and oil industries as an antioxidant, and is also used in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and insecticides.

## Reasons for Citation

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is on the Right to Know Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by ACGIH, DOT, NIOSH, DEP, IARC, NFPA and EPA.
- ▶ This chemical is on the Special Health Hazard Substance List.

[SEE GLOSSARY ON PAGE 5.](#)

## FIRST AID

### Eye Contact

- ▶ Immediately flush with large amounts of water for at least 30 minutes, lifting upper and lower lids. Remove contact lenses, if worn, while flushing. Seek medical attention.

### Skin Contact

- ▶ Quickly remove contaminated clothing. Immediately wash contaminated skin with large amounts of water.

### Inhalation

- ▶ Remove the person from exposure
- ▶ Begin rescue breathing (using universal precautions) if breathing has stopped and CPR if heart action has stopped.
- ▶ Transfer promptly to a medical facility.

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

CHEMTREC: 1-800-424-9300

NJDEP Hotline: 1-877-927-6337

National Response Center: 1-800-424-8802

**EMERGENCY RESPONDERS >>>> SEE BACK PAGE**

## Hazard Summary

Hazard Rating	NJDOH	NFPA
<b>HEALTH</b>	-	3
<b>FLAMMABILITY</b>	-	1
<b>REACTIVITY</b>	-	0
CARCINOGEN COMBUSTIBLE POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE		

*Hazard Rating Key: 0=minimal; 1=slight; 2=moderate; 3=serious; 4=severe*

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** can affect you when inhaled and by passing through the skin.
- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** should be handled as a CARCINOGEN and MUTAGEN--WITH EXTREME CAUTION.
- ▶ Contact can irritate and burn the skin and eyes with possible eye damage.
- ▶ Inhaling **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** can irritate the nose and throat causing coughing and wheezing.
- ▶ Exposure to **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** can cause headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle twitching and convulsions.
- ▶ High levels of this substance can reduce the blood's ability to transport *Oxygen*, causing headache, fatigue, dizziness, and a blue color to the skin and lips (*methemoglobinemia*). Exposure to very high levels can cause trouble breathing, collapse and even death.
- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** may cause a skin allergy.
- ▶ High or repeated exposure may affect the kidneys and liver.

## Workplace Exposure Limits

NIOSH: The recommended airborne exposure limit (REL) is **5 ppm** averaged over a 10-hour workshift.

ACGIH: The threshold limit value (TLV) is **5 ppm** averaged over an 8-hour workshift.

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** may be a CARCINOGEN in humans. There may be no safe level of exposure to a carcinogen, so all contact should be reduced to the lowest possible level.
- ▶ The above exposure limits are for air levels only. When skin contact also occurs, you may be overexposed, even though air levels are less than the limits listed above.

## Determining Your Exposure

- ▶ Read the product manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and the label to determine product ingredients and important safety and health information about the product mixture.
- ▶ For each individual hazardous ingredient, read the New Jersey Department of Health Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet, available on the RTK website ([www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb](http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb)) or in your facility's RTK Central File or Hazard Communication Standard file.
- ▶ You have a right to this information under the New Jersey Worker and Community Right to Know Act, the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Act if you are a public worker in New Jersey, and under the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) if you are a private worker.
- ▶ The New Jersey Right to Know Act requires most employers to label chemicals in the workplace and requires public employers to provide their employees with information concerning chemical hazards and controls. The federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) and the PEOSH Hazard Communication Standard (N.J.A.C. 12:100-7) require employers to provide similar information and training to their employees.

This Fact Sheet is a summary of available information regarding the health hazards that may result from exposure. Duration of exposure, concentration of the substance and other factors will affect your susceptibility to any of the potential effects described below.

## Health Hazard Information

### Acute Health Effects

The following acute (short-term) health effects may occur immediately or shortly after exposure to **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene**:

- ▶ Contact can irritate and burn the skin and eyes with possible eye damage.
- ▶ Inhaling **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** can irritate the nose and throat causing coughing and wheezing.
- ▶ Exposure to **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** can cause headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle twitching and convulsions.
- ▶ High levels of this substance can reduce the blood's ability to transport *Oxygen*, causing headache, fatigue, dizziness, and a blue color to the skin and lips (*methemoglobinemia*). Exposure to very high levels can cause trouble breathing, collapse and even death.

### Chronic Health Effects

The following chronic (long-term) health effects can occur at some time after exposure to **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** and can last for months or years:

#### Cancer Hazard

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** may be a CARCINOGEN in humans since it has been shown to cause stomach cancer in animals.
- ▶ Many scientists believe there is no safe level of exposure to a carcinogen. Such substance may also have the potential for causing reproductive damage in humans.

#### Reproductive Hazard

- ▶ According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health, **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** has not been tested for its ability to affect reproduction.

#### Other Effects

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** may cause a skin allergy. If allergy develops, very low future exposure can cause itching and a skin rash.
- ▶ High or repeated exposure may affect the kidneys and liver.

## Medical

### Medical Testing

Before beginning employment and at regular times thereafter, (at least annually), the following are recommended:

- ▶ Liver and kidney function tests

If symptoms develop or overexposure is suspected, the following are recommended:

- ▶ Blood methemoglobin level
- ▶ Evaluation by a qualified allergist can help diagnose skin allergy.

Any evaluation should include a careful history of past and present symptoms with an exam. Medical tests that look for damage already done are not a substitute for controlling exposure.

Request copies of your medical testing. You have a legal right to this information under the OSHA Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records Standard (29 CFR 1910.1020).

### Mixed Exposures

- ▶ More than light alcohol consumption can cause liver damage. Drinking alcohol can increase the liver damage caused by **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene**.

## Workplace Controls and Practices

Very toxic chemicals, or those that are reproductive hazards or sensitizers, require expert advice on control measures if a less toxic chemical cannot be substituted. Control measures include: (1) enclosing chemical processes for severely irritating and corrosive chemicals, (2) using local exhaust ventilation for chemicals that may be harmful with a single exposure, and (3) using general ventilation to control exposures to skin and eye irritants. For further information on workplace controls, consult the NIOSH document on Control Banding at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ctrlbanding/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ctrlbanding/).

The following work practices are also recommended:

- ▶ Label process containers.
- ▶ Provide employees with hazard information and training.
- ▶ Monitor airborne chemical concentrations.
- ▶ Use engineering controls if concentrations exceed recommended exposure levels.
- ▶ Provide eye wash fountains and emergency showers.
- ▶ Wash or shower if skin comes in contact with a hazardous material.
- ▶ Always wash at the end of the workshift.
- ▶ Change into clean clothing if clothing becomes contaminated.
- ▶ Do not take contaminated clothing home.
- ▶ Get special training to wash contaminated clothing.
- ▶ Do not eat, smoke, or drink in areas where chemicals are being handled, processed or stored.
- ▶ Wash hands carefully before eating, smoking, drinking, applying cosmetics or using the toilet.

In addition, the following may be useful or required:

- ▶ Before entering a confined space where **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is present, check to make sure sufficient *Oxygen* (19.5%) exists.
- ▶ Use a vacuum or a wet method to reduce dust during clean-up. **DO NOT DRY SWEEP.**
- ▶ Use a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter when vacuuming. Do not use a standard shop vacuum.
- ▶ Where possible, transfer **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** from drums or other containers to process containers in an enclosed system.

## Personal Protective Equipment

The OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Standard (29 CFR 1910.132) requires employers to determine the appropriate personal protective equipment for each hazard and to train employees on how and when to use protective equipment.

The following recommendations are only guidelines and may not apply to every situation.

### Gloves and Clothing

- ▶ Avoid skin contact with **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene**. Wear personal protective equipment made from material which can not be permeated or degraded by this substance. Safety equipment suppliers and manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove and clothing material for your operation.

- ▶ Safety equipment manufacturers recommend Butyl and Viton as glove materials for *aromatic Phenols*, and Tychem® BR, LV, Responder® and TK, or the equivalent, as protective materials for *aromatic Phenols*.
- ▶ All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.

### Eye Protection

- ▶ Wear non-vented, impact resistant goggles when working with fumes, gases, or vapors.
- ▶ Wear a face shield along with goggles when working with corrosive, highly irritating or toxic substances.

### Respiratory Protection

**Improper use of respirators is dangerous.** Respirators should only be used if the employer has implemented a written program that takes into account workplace conditions, requirements for worker training, respirator fit testing, and medical exams, as described in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134).

- ▶ Where the potential exists for exposure over **5 ppm**, use a NIOSH approved supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode. For increased protection use in combination with an auxiliary self-contained breathing apparatus operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode.
- ▶ Exposure to **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is dangerous because it can replace *Oxygen* and lead to suffocation. Only NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in the positive pressure mode should be used in *Oxygen* deficient environments.

## Fire Hazards

If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in the OSHA Fire Brigades Standard (29 CFR 1910.156).

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is a COMBUSTIBLE SOLID.
- ▶ Use dry chemical, CO<sub>2</sub>, water spray or alcohol-resistant foam as extinguishing agents.
- ▶ POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE.
- ▶ Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.
- ▶ Flow or agitation may generate electrostatic charge.

## Spills and Emergencies

If employees are required to clean-up spills, they must be properly trained and equipped. The OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (29 CFR 1910.120) may apply.

If **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is spilled, take the following steps:

- ▶ Evacuate personnel and secure and control entrance to the area.
- ▶ Eliminate all ignition sources.
- ▶ Moisten spilled material first or use a HEPA-filter vacuum for clean-up and place into sealed containers for disposal.
- ▶ Ventilate and wash area after clean-up is complete.
- ▶ DO NOT wash into sewer.
- ▶ It may be necessary to contain and dispose of **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** as a HAZARDOUS WASTE. Contact your state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or your regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for specific recommendations.

## Handling and Storage

Prior to working with **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.

- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** reacts violently with NITRIC ACID.
- ▶ **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is not compatible with OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); ACID CHLORIDES; ACID ANHYDRIDES; and STRONG BASES (such as SODIUM HYDROXIDE and POTASSIUM HYDROXIDE).
- ▶ Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from LIGHT, AIR and SUNLIGHT as **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** will turn brown.
- ▶ Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where **1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is used, handled, or stored in a manner that could create a potential fire or explosion hazard.

## Occupational Health Information Resources

The New Jersey Department of Health offers multiple services in occupational health. These services include providing informational resources, educational materials, public presentations, and industrial hygiene and medical investigations and evaluations.

### For more information, please contact:

New Jersey Department of Health  
Right to Know  
PO Box 368  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0368  
Phone: 609-984-2202  
Fax: 609-984-7407  
E-mail: [rtk@doh.state.nj.us](mailto:rtk@doh.state.nj.us)  
Web address: <http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb>

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are not intended to be copied and sold  
for commercial purposes.***

## GLOSSARY

**ACGIH** is the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. They publish guidelines called Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) for exposure to workplace chemicals.

**Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs)** are established by the EPA. They describe the risk to humans resulting from once-in-a-lifetime, or rare, exposure to airborne chemicals.

**Boiling point** is the temperature at which a substance can change its physical state from a liquid to a gas.

A **carcinogen** is a substance that causes cancer.

The **CAS number** is unique, identifying number, assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service, to a specific chemical.

**CFR** is the Code of Federal Regulations, which are the regulations of the United States government.

A **combustible** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that will burn.

A **corrosive** substance is a gas, liquid or solid that causes destruction of human skin or severe corrosion of containers.

**DEP** is the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

**DOT** is the Department of Transportation, the federal agency that regulates the transportation of chemicals.

**EPA** is the Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency responsible for regulating environmental hazards.

**ERG** is the Emergency Response Guidebook. It is a guide for emergency responders for transportation emergencies involving hazardous substances.

**Emergency Response Planning Guideline (ERPG)** values provide estimates of concentration ranges where one reasonably might anticipate observing adverse effects.

A **fetus** is an unborn human or animal.

A **flammable** substance is a solid, liquid, vapor or gas that will ignite easily and burn rapidly.

The **flash point** is the temperature at which a liquid or solid gives off vapor that can form a flammable mixture with air.

**IARC** is the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a scientific group.

**Ionization Potential** is the amount of energy needed to remove an electron from an atom or molecule. It is measured in electron volts.

**IRIS** is the Integrated Risk Information System database on human health effects that may result from exposure to various chemicals, maintained by federal EPA.

**LEL or Lower Explosive Limit**, is the lowest concentration of a combustible substance (gas or vapor) in the air capable of continuing an explosion.

**mg/m<sup>3</sup>** means milligrams of a chemical in a cubic meter of air. It is a measure of concentration (weight/volume).

A **mutagen** is a substance that causes mutations. A **mutation** is a change in the genetic material in a body cell. Mutations can lead to birth defects, miscarriages, or cancer.

**NFPA** is the National Fire Protection Association. It classifies substances according to their fire and explosion hazard.

**NIOSH** is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It tests equipment, evaluates and approves respirators, conducts studies of workplace hazards, and proposes standards to OSHA.

**NTP** is the National Toxicology Program which tests chemicals and reviews evidence for cancer.

**OSHA** is the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards.

**PEOSHA** is the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards in public workplaces.

**Permeated** is the movement of chemicals through protective materials.

**ppm** means parts of a substance per million parts of air. It is a measure of concentration by volume in air.

**Protective Action Criteria (PAC)** are values established by the Department of Energy and are based on AEGLs and ERPGs. They are used for emergency planning of chemical release events.

A **reactive** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that releases energy under certain conditions.

**STEL** is a Short Term Exposure Limit which is usually a 15-minute exposure that should not be exceeded at any time during a work day.

A **teratogen** is a substance that causes birth defects by damaging the fetus.

**UEL or Upper Explosive Limit** is the highest concentration in air above which there is too much fuel (gas or vapor) to begin a reaction or explosion.

**Vapor Density** is the ratio of the weight of a given volume of one gas to the weight of another (usually *Hydrogen*), at the same temperature and pressure.

The **vapor pressure** is a force exerted by the vapor in equilibrium with the solid or liquid phase of the same substance. The higher the vapor pressure the higher concentration of the substance in air.

Common Name: **1,2-DIHYDROXYBENZENE**

Synonyms: Catechol; o-Dihydroxybenzene; Pyrocatechol

CAS No: 120-80-9

 Molecular Formula: C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>6</sub>O<sub>2</sub>

RTK Substance No: 0722

 Description: Colorless, crystalline solid, with a slight *Phenolic* odor, that becomes a vapor at ordinary temperatures

## HAZARD DATA

Hazard Rating	Firefighting	Reactivity
<b>3 - Health</b> <b>1 - Fire</b> <b>0 - Reactivity</b> DOT#: UN 2811 ERG Guide #: 154 Hazard Class: 6.1 (Poison)	COMBUSTIBLE SOLID Use dry chemical, CO <sub>2</sub> , water spray or alcohol-resistant foam as extinguishing agents. POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE. Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool. Flow or agitation may generate electrostatic charge.	<b>1,2-Dihydroxybenzene</b> reacts violently with NITRIC ACID. <b>1,2-Dihydroxybenzene</b> is not compatible with OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); ACID CHLORIDES; ACID ANHYDRIDES; and STRONG BASES (such as SODIUM HYDROXIDE and POTASSIUM HYDROXIDE).

## SPILL/LEAKS

**Isolation Distance:**

Small Spills: 30 meters (100 feet)

Large Spills: 100 meters (300 feet)

Fire: 800 meters (1/2 mile)

Moisten spilled material first or use a HEPA-filter vacuum for clean-up and place into sealed containers for disposal.

DO NOT wash into sewer.

**1,2-Dihydroxybenzene** is moderately to highly toxic to aquatic organisms.

## PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

**Odor Threshold:** *Phenolic* odor

**Flash Point:** 260°F (127°C)

**Auto Ignition Temp:** 950°F (510°C)

**Vapor Density:** 3.8 (air = 1)

**Vapor Pressure:** 5 mm Hg at 219°F (104°C)

**Specific Gravity:** 1.34 (water = 1)

**Water Solubility:** Slightly soluble

**Boiling Point:** 473°F (245°C)

**Melting Point:** 221°F (105°C)

**Ionization Potential:** 8.15 +/- 1.0 eV

**Molecular Weight:** 110

## EXPOSURE LIMITS

**NIOSH:** 5 ppm, 10-hr TWA

**ACGIH:** 5 ppm, 8-hr TWA

The Protective Action Criteria values are:

PAC-1 = 5 ppm

PAC-2 = 7.5 ppm

PAC-3 = 20 ppm

## PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Gloves:** Butyl and Viton (>8-hr breakthrough for *aromatic Phenols*)

**Coveralls:** Tychem® BR, LV, Responder® and TK (>8-hr breakthrough for *aromatic Phenols*)

**Respirator:** >5 ppm -Supplied air or SCBA

## HEALTH EFFECTS

**Eyes:** Irritation and burns

**Skin:** Irritation and burns

**Inhalation:** Nose and throat irritation with coughing and wheezing

Dizziness, nausea, vomiting and convulsions

Methemoglobinemia with headache, fatigue and blue color to the skin and lips

**Chronic:** Cancer (stomach) in animals

## FIRST AID AND DECONTAMINATION

**Remove** the person from exposure.

**Flush** eyes with large amounts of water for at least 30 minutes. Remove contact lenses if worn. Seek medical attention.

**Quickly** remove contaminated clothing and wash contaminated skin with large amounts of water.

**Begin** artificial respiration if breathing has stopped and CPR if necessary.

**Transfer** promptly to a medical facility.