Common Name: ETHYLENE
CAS Number: 74-85-1
DOT Number: UN 1962 (compressed)
UN 1038 (refrigerated liquid)

HAZARD SUMMARY
* Ethylene gas can affect you when breathed in.
* Skin contact with liquid Ethylene can cause frostbite.
* Exposure to Ethylene can cause headache, dizziness, fatigue, lightheadedness, confusion and unconsciousness.
* Ethylene is a HIGHLY FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE chemical and a DANGEROUS FIRE and EXPLOSION HAZARD.

IDENTIFICATION
Ethylene is a colorless gas at room temperature. At very low temperatures it is a liquid. It is used as a refrigerant and in welding and cutting metals. It is also used to manufacture Ethylene Oxide, Mustard Gas and other organics, and to accelerate the ripening of fruits.

REASON FOR CITATION
* Ethylene is on the Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by ACGIH, DOT, DEP, NFPA and EPA.
* This chemical is on the Special Health Hazard Substance List because it is FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE.
* Definitions are provided on page 5.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE BEING EXPOSED
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 and training concerning chemical hazards and controls. The federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, 1910.1200, requires private employers to provide similar training and information to their employees.

* Exposure to hazardous substances should be routinely evaluated. This may include collecting personal and area air samples. You can obtain copies of sampling results from your employer. You have a legal right to this information under OSHA 1910.1020.

* If you think you are experiencing any work-related health problems, see a doctor trained to recognize occupational diseases. Take this Fact Sheet with you.
* ODOR THRESHOLD = 270 ppm.
* The range of accepted odor threshold values is quite broad. Caution should be used in relying on odor alone as a warning of potentially hazardous exposures.

WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMITS
No occupational exposure limits have been established for Ethylene. This does not mean that this substance is not harmful. Safe work practices should always be followed.

* Large amounts of Ethylene will decrease the amount of available Oxygen. Oxygen content should be routinely tested to ensure that it is at least 19% by volume.

WAYS OF REDUCING EXPOSURE
* Where possible, enclose operations and use local exhaust ventilation at the site of chemical release. If local exhaust ventilation or enclosure is not used, respirators should be worn.
* Wear protective work clothing.
* Permanently installed analyzers should be used to monitor for a dangerous release of Ethylene gas.
* Wash thoroughly immediately after exposure to Ethylene.
* On skin contact with Ethylene, immediately submerge the affected body part in warm water.
* Post hazard and warning information in the work area. In addition, as part of an ongoing education and training effort, communicate all information on the health and safety hazards of Ethylene to potentially exposed workers.
This Fact Sheet is a summary source of information of all potential and most severe 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 Ethylene:

* Skin contact with liquid Ethylene can cause frostbite.
* Exposure to Ethylene can cause headache, dizziness, fatigue, lightheadedness, confusion and unconsciousness.

Chronic Health Effects
The following chronic (long-term) health effects can occur at some time after exposure to Ethylene and can last for months or years:

Cancer Hazard
* According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Ethylene has not been tested for its ability to cause cancer in animals.

Reproductive Hazard
* According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Ethylene has not been tested for its ability to affect reproduction.

Other Long-Term Effects
* Ethylene has not been tested for other chronic (long-term) health effects.

MEDICAL

Medical Testing
There is no special test for this chemical. However, if illness occurs or overexposure is suspected, medical attention is recommended.

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 OSHA 1910.1020.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

WORKPLACE CONTROLS ARE BETTER THAN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT. However, for some jobs (such as outside work, confined space entry, jobs done only once in a while, or jobs done while workplace controls are being installed), personal protective equipment may be appropriate.

OSHA 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.
Clothing
* Avoid skin contact with Ethylene. Wear protective gloves and clothing. Safety equipment suppliers/manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove/clothing material for your operation.
* Where exposure to cold equipment, vapors, or liquid may occur, employees should be provided with special clothing designed to prevent the freezing of body tissues.
* 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 indirect-vent, impact and splash resistant goggles when working with liquids.
* Wear a face shield along with goggles when working with corrosive, highly irritating or toxic substances.

Respiratory Protection
IMPROPER USE OF RESPIRATORS IS DANGEROUS.
Such equipment should only be used if the employer has a written program that takes into account workplace conditions, requirements for worker training, respirator fit testing and medical exams, as described in OSHA 1910.134.

* Engineering controls must be effective to ensure that exposure to Ethylene does not occur.
* Exposure to Ethylene is dangerous because it can replace Oxygen and lead to suffocation. Only MSHA/NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in the positive pressure mode should be used in Oxygen deficient environments.

HANDLING AND STORAGE
* Prior to working with Ethylene you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.
* Ethylene mixed with TRIFLUOROMETHYL HYPOFLUORIDE, OZONE and NITROGEN DIOXIDE may result in an explosion.
* Ethylene is not compatible with OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); CHLORINE COMPOUNDS; NITROMETHANE; STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC); HALOGENS; and BENZOYL PEROXIDE.
* Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS.
* Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where Ethylene is used, handled, or stored.
* Metal containers involving the transfer of Ethylene should be grounded and bonded.
* Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of Ethylene.
* Wherever Ethylene is used, handled, manufactured, or stored, use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: If I have acute health effects, will I later get chronic health effects?
A: Not always. Most chronic (long-term) effects result from repeated exposures to a chemical.

Q: Can I get long-term effects without ever having short-term effects?
A: Yes, because long-term effects can occur from repeated exposures to a chemical at levels not high enough to make you immediately sick.

Q: What are my chances of getting sick when I have been exposed to chemicals?
A: The likelihood of becoming sick from chemicals is increased as the amount of exposure increases. This is determined by the length of time and the amount of material to which someone is exposed.

Q: When are higher exposures more likely?
A: Conditions which increase risk of exposure include physical and mechanical processes (heating, pouring, spraying, spills and evaporation from large surface areas such as open containers), and "confined space" exposures (working inside vats, reactors, boilers, small rooms, etc.).

Q: Is the risk of getting sick higher for workers than for community residents?
A: Yes. Exposures in the community, except possibly in cases of fires or spills, are usually much lower than those found in the workplace. However, people in the community may be exposed to contaminated water as well as to chemicals in the air over long periods. This may be a problem for children or people who are already ill.

The following information is available from:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Occupational Health Service
PO Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
(609) 984-1863
(609) 984-7407 (fax)

Web address: http://www.state.nj.us/health/eho/odisweb/

Industrial Hygiene Information
Industrial hygienists are available to answer your questions regarding the control of chemical exposures using exhaust ventilation, special work practices, good housekeeping, good hygiene practices, and personal protective equipment including respirators. In addition, they can help to interpret the results of industrial hygiene survey data.

Medical Evaluation
If you think you are becoming sick because of exposure to chemicals at your workplace, you may call personnel at the Department of Health and Senior Services, Occupational Health Service, who can help you find the information you need.

Public Presentations
Presentations and educational programs on occupational health or the Right to Know Act can be organized for labor unions, trade associations and other groups.

Right to Know Information Resources
The Right to Know Infoline (609) 984-2202 can answer questions about the identity and potential health effects of chemicals, list of educational materials in occupational health, references used to prepare the Fact Sheets, preparation of the Right to Know Survey, education and training programs, labeling requirements, and general information regarding the Right to Know Act. Violations of the law should be reported to (609) 984-2202.
DEFINITIONS

ACGIH is the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. It recommends upper limits (called TLVs) for exposure to workplace chemicals.

A carcinogen is a substance that causes cancer.

The CAS number is assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service to identify a specific chemical.

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

A corrosive substance is a gas, liquid or solid that causes irreversible damage to human tissue or 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.

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.

HHAG is the Human Health Assessment Group of the federal EPA.

IARC is the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a scientific group that classifies chemicals according to their cancer-causing potential.

A miscible substance is a liquid or gas that will evenly dissolve in another.

mg/m$^3$ 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.

NAERG is the North American Emergency Response Guidebook. It was jointly developed by Transport Canada, the United States Department of Transportation and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation of Mexico. It is a guide for first responders to quickly identify the specific or generic hazards of material involved in a transportation incident, and to protect themselves and the general public during the initial response phase of the incident.

NCI is the National Cancer Institute, a federal agency that determines the cancer-causing potential of chemicals.

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 Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards.

PEL is the Permissible Exposure Limit which is enforceable by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

PIH is a DOT designation for chemicals which are Poison Inhalation Hazards.

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

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

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

TLV is the Threshold Limit Value, the workplace exposure limit recommended by ACGIH.

The vapor pressure is a measure of how readily a liquid or a solid mixes with air at its surface. A higher vapor pressure indicates a higher concentration of the substance in air and therefore increases the likelihood of breathing it in.
Common Name: **ETHYLENE**  
DOT Number:  **UN 1962 (compressed)**  
**UN 1038 (refrigerated liquid)**  
NAERG Code:  **116P (compressed)**  
**115 (refrigerated liquid)**  
CAS Number:  **74-85-1**

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**FLAMMABLE AND REACTIVE**  
POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE  
CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE

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

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**FIRE HAZARDS**

* **Ethylene** is a **FLAMMABLE LIQUID or GAS.**  
* **Stop flow of gas.** Use dry chemical, CO₂, or water spray in large amounts.  
* **Move containers from fire area if you can do it without risk.**  
* **POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE,** including Acetylene, Hydrogen and Methane.  
* **CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.**  
* **Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.**  
* **Vapors may travel to a source of ignition and flash back.**  
* **Vapor is heavier than air and may travel a distance to cause a fire or explosion far from the source.**  
* **If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in OSHA 1910.156.**

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**SPILLS AND EMERGENCIES**

If **Ethylene** is leaked, take the following steps:

* **Evacuate persons not wearing protective equipment from area of leak until clean-up is complete.**  
* **Remove all ignition sources.**  
* **Ventilate area of leak to disperse the gas.**  
* **Stop flow of gas.** If source of leak is a cylinder and the leak cannot be stopped in place, remove the leaking cylinder to a safe place in the open air, and repair leak or allow cylinder to empty.  
* **Keep Ethylene out of a confined space,** such as a sewe, because of the possibility of an explosion, unless the sewer is designed to prevent the build-up of explosive concentrations.  
* **It may be necessary to contain and dispose of Ethylene 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.