Common Name: POTASSIUM NITRATE

CAS Number: 7757-79-1
DOT Number: UN 1486

HAZARD SUMMARY
* Potassium Nitrate can affect you when breathed in.
* Contact can cause eye and skin irritation.
* Breathing Potassium Nitrate can irritate the nose and throat causing sneezing and coughing.
* High levels can interfere with the ability of the blood to carry Oxygen causing headache, fatigue, dizziness, and a blue color to the skin and lips (methemoglobinemia). Higher levels can cause trouble breathing, collapse and even death.
* Potassium Nitrate may affect the kidneys and cause anemia.

IDENTIFICATION
Potassium Nitrate is a transparent, white or colorless, crystalline (sand-like) powder or solid with a sharp, salty taste. It is used to make explosives, matches, fertilizer, fireworks, glass and rocket fuel.

REASON FOR CITATION
* Potassium Nitrate is on the Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by DOT.
* 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.

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

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.
* Wash thoroughly immediately after exposure to Potassium Nitrate.
* 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 Potassium Nitrate 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 Potassium Nitrate:

* Contact can cause eye and skin irritation.
* Breathing Potassium Nitrate can irritate the nose and 
  throat causing sneezing and coughing.
* High levels can interfere with the ability of the blood to 
  carry Oxygen causing headache, fatigue, dizziness, and a 
  blue color to the skin and lips (methemoglobinemia). 
  Higher 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 Potassium Nitrate 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, 
  Potassium Nitrate has not been tested for its ability to 
  cause cancer in animals.

Reproductive Hazard
* There is limited evidence that Potassium Nitrate is a 
  teratogen in animals. Until further testing has been done, it 
  should be treated as a possible teratogen in humans.

Other Long-Term Effects
* Potassium Nitrate may affect the kidneys and cause 
  anemia.

MEDICAL

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

* Blood test for methemoglobin.
* Kidney function tests.
* Complete blood count.

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.

WORKPLACE CONTROLS AND PRACTICES

Unless a less toxic chemical can be substituted for a hazardous 
substance, ENGINEERING CONTROLS are the most 
effective way of reducing exposure. The best protection is to 
enclose operations and/or provide local exhaust ventilation at 
the site of chemical release. Isolating operations can also 
reduce exposure. Using respirators or protective equipment is 
less effective than the controls mentioned above, but is 
sometimes necessary.

In evaluating the controls present in your workplace, consider: 
(1) how hazardous the substance is, (2) how much of the 
substance is released into the workplace and (3) whether 
harmful skin or eye contact could occur. Special controls 
should be in place for highly toxic chemicals or when 
significant skin, eye, or breathing exposures are possible.

In addition, the following control is recommended:

* Where possible, automatically transfer Potassium Nitrate 
  from drums or other storage containers to process 
  containers.

Good WORK PRACTICES can help to reduce hazardous 
exposures. The following work practices are recommended:

* Workers whose clothing has been contaminated by 
  Potassium Nitrate should change into clean clothing 
  promptly.
* Do not take contaminated work clothes home. Family 
  members could be exposed.
* Contaminated work clothes should be laundered by 
  individuals who have been informed of the hazards of 
  exposure to Potassium Nitrate.
* Eye wash fountains should be provided in the immediate 
  work area for emergency use.
* If there is the possibility of skin exposure, emergency 
  shower facilities should be provided.
* On skin contact with Potassium Nitrate, immediately wash 
  or shower to remove the chemical.
* Do not eat, smoke, or drink where Potassium Nitrate is 
  handled, processed, or stored, since the chemical can be 
  swallowed. Wash hands carefully before eating, drinking, 
  smoking, or using the toilet.
* Use a vacuum or a wet method to reduce dust during clean-
  up. DO NOT DRY SWEEP.

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 Potassium Nitrate. Wear protective gloves and clothing. Safety equipment suppliers/manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove/clothing material for your operation.
- All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.

**Eye Protection**
- Wear eye protection with side shields or goggles.
- 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.

- NIOSH has established new testing and certification requirements for negative pressure, air purifying, particulate filter and filtering facepiece respirators. The filter classifications of dust/mist/fume, paint spray or pesticide prefilters, and filters for radon daughters, have been replaced with the N, R, and P series. Each series has three levels of filtering efficiency: 95%, 99%, and 99.9%. Check with your safety equipment supplier or your respirator manufacturer to determine which respirator is appropriate for your facility.

- If while wearing a filter or cartridge respirator you can smell, taste, or otherwise detect Potassium Nitrate, or if while wearing particulate filters abnormal resistance to breathing is experienced, or eye irritation occurs while wearing a full facepiece respirator, leave the area immediately. Check to make sure the respirator-to-face seal is still good. If it is, replace the filter or cartridge. If the seal is no longer good, you may need a new respirator.

- Be sure to consider all potential exposures in your workplace. You may need a combination of filters, prefilters or cartridges to protect against different forms of a chemical (such as vapor and mist) or against a mixture of chemicals.

- Where the potential for high exposure exists, use a MSHA/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.

**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 dust releasing operations (grinding, mixing, blasting, dumping, etc.), other 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.

Q: Can men as well as women be affected by chemicals that cause reproductive system damage?
A: Yes. Some chemicals reduce potency or fertility in both men and women. Some damage sperm and eggs, possibly leading to birth defects.

Q: Who is at the greatest risk from reproductive hazards?
A: Pregnant women are at greatest risk from chemicals that harm the developing fetus. However, chemicals may affect the ability to have children, so both men and women of childbearing age are at high risk.

Q: Should I be concerned if a chemical is a teratogen in animals?
A: Yes. Although some chemicals may affect humans differently than they affect animals, damage to animals suggests that similar damage can occur in humans.
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/ehoh/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.

CFR is the Code of Federal Regulations, which consists of 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 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.

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

IRIS is the Integrated Risk Information System database of the federal EPA.

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

mg/m³ 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.

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.

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.

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: **POTASSIUM NITRATE**  
DOT Number: **UN 1486**  
NAERG Code: **140**  
CAS Number: **7757-79-1**

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<td>REACTIVITY</td>
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**POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE**

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

**FIRE HAZARDS**

* **Potassium Nitrate** is noncombustible, however, it is a STRONG OXIDIZER and will accelerate burning when involved in a fire.  
* Use water only. DO NOT USE DRY CHEMICAL, CO₂ or HALOGENATED extinguishing agents.  
* POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE, including Nitrogen Oxides.  
* **Potassium Nitrate** may ignite combustibles (wood, paper and oil).  
* If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in OSHA 1910.156.

**SPILLS AND EMERGENCIES**

If **Potassium Nitrate** is spilled, take the following steps:

* Evacuate persons not wearing protective equipment from area of spill until clean-up is complete.  
* Collect powdered material in the most convenient and safe manner and deposit in sealed containers.  
* Ventilate and wash area after clean-up is complete.  
* It may be necessary to contain and dispose of **Potassium Nitrate** 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.  
* If employees are required to clean-up spills, they must be properly trained and equipped. OSHA 1910.120(q) may be applicable.

**HANDLING AND STORAGE**

* Prior to working with **Potassium Nitrate** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.  
* **Potassium Nitrate** in contact with SULFURIC ACID or COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS which are in finely divided or liquid form may be explosive.  
* **Potassium Nitrate** is not compatible with REDUCING AGENTS; STRONG BASES (such as SODIUM HYDROXIDE and POTASSIUM HYDROXIDE); STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC); CHEMICALLY ACTIVE METALS (such as POTASSIUM, SODIUM, MAGNESIUM and ZINC); METAL SALTS; FINELY DIVIDED METALS; and HALOGENS.  
* Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from MOISTURE.

**FIRST AID**

* For POISON INFORMATION call 1-800-222-1222

**Eye Contact**

* Immediately flush with large amounts of water for at least 15 minutes, occasionally lifting upper and lower lids.

**Skin Contact**

* Remove contaminated clothing. Wash contaminated skin with water.

**Breathing**

* 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.

**PHYSICAL DATA**

**Water Solubility:** Soluble

**OTHER COMMONLY USED NAMES**

**Chemical Name:**  
Nitric Acid, Potassium Salt  
**Other Names:**  
Niter; Nitre; Salt peter

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**Not intended to be copied and sold for commercial purposes.**

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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

**Right to Know Program**

PO Box 368, Trenton, NJ 08625-0368  
(609) 984-2202

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FOR LARGE SPILLS AND FIRES immediately call your fire department. You can request emergency information from the following:

CHEMTREC: (800) 424-9300  
NJDEP HOTLINE: 1-877-WARN-DEP