



# Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet

Common Name: **SODIUM DITHIONITE**

Synonyms: Sodium Hydrosulfite

Chemical Name: Dithionous Acid, Disodium Salt

Date: April 2000

Revision: April 2010

CAS Number: 7775-14-6

RTK Substance Number: 1697

DOT Number: UN 1384

## Description and Use

**Sodium Dithionite** is a white to grayish, crystalline (sand-like) powder with a slight rotten egg odor. It is used in vat dyeing of textiles and as a bleaching agent and reagent.

## Reasons for Citation

- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** is on the Right to Know Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by DOT and NFPA.
- ▶ 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 15 minutes, lifting upper and lower lids. Remove contact lenses, if worn, while rinsing.

### Skin Contact

- ▶ Quickly remove contaminated clothing. Immediately wash contaminated skin with large amounts of soap and 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 LAST PAGE

## Hazard Summary

Hazard Rating	NJDOH	NFPA
HEALTH	-	2
FLAMMABILITY	-	1
REACTIVITY	-	2
SPONTANEOUSLY COMBUSTIBLE 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

- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** can affect you when inhaled.
- ▶ Contact can irritate and burn the skin and eyes with possible eye damage.
- ▶ Inhaling **Sodium Dithionite** can irritate the nose, throat and lungs causing coughing, wheezing and/or shortness of breath.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- ▶ Exposure can cause headache, dizziness, irritability, lightheadedness, and convulsions.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** may cause an asthma-like allergy. Future exposure can cause asthma attacks with shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and/or chest tightness.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** is REACTIVE and contact with MOIST AIR, MOISTURE, WATER or HEAT can cause **Sodium Dithionite** to decompose, producing enough heat to ignite combustible materials.

## Workplace Exposure Limits

No occupational exposure limits have been established for **Sodium Dithionite**. However, it may pose a health risk. Always follow safe work practices.

## 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 and 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 **Sodium Dithionite**:

- ▶ Contact can irritate and burn the skin and eyes with possible eye damage.
- ▶ Inhaling **Sodium Dithionite** can irritate the nose, throat and lungs causing coughing, wheezing and/or shortness of breath.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- ▶ Exposure can cause headache, dizziness, irritability, lightheadedness, and convulsions.

### Chronic Health Effects

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

### Cancer Hazard

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

### Other Effects

- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** may cause an asthma-like allergy. Future exposure can cause asthma attacks with shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and/or chest tightness.

## Medical

### Medical Testing

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

- ▶ Lung function tests. The results may be normal if the person is not having an attack at the time of the test.

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

- ▶ Smoking can cause heart disease, lung cancer, emphysema, and other respiratory problems. It may worsen respiratory conditions caused by chemical exposure. Even if you have smoked for a long time, stopping now will reduce your risk of developing health problems.

## 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 **Sodium Dithionite** may be present, check to make sure that an explosive concentration does not exist.

## 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 **Sodium Dithionite**. 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.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** manufacturers recommend Neoprene, Natural Rubber and Polyvinyl Chloride for gloves, and Tyvek®, or the equivalent, as protective materials for clothing.
- ▶ 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.** 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 overexposure to **Sodium Dithionite**, use a NIOSH approved full facepiece respirator with an acid gas cartridge which is specifically approved for *Sulfur Dioxide* and high efficiency prefilters. Increased protection is obtained from full facepiece powered-air purifying respirators.
- ▶ Leave the area immediately if (1) while wearing a filter or cartridge respirator you can smell, taste, or otherwise detect **Sodium Dithionite**, (2) while wearing particulate filters abnormal resistance to breathing is experienced, or (3) eye irritation occurs while wearing a full facepiece respirator. 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.
- ▶ Consider all potential sources of exposure 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 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 or an emergency escape air cylinder.

## 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).

- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** is REACTIVE and contact with MOIST AIR, MOISTURE, WATER or HEAT can cause **Sodium Dithionite** to decompose, producing enough heat to ignite combustible materials.
- ▶ Use CO<sub>2</sub> or dry sand for small fires. Use water in flooding quantities for large fires. If flooding quantities are not available, let burn.
- ▶ Monitor container temperature for at least 48-hours to make sure decomposition is not occurring.
- ▶ POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE, including *Sulfur Dioxide*.
- ▶ CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.
- ▶ Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** may form an ignitable dust/air mixture in closed tanks or containers.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** may be ignited by static discharge.

### 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 **Sodium Dithionite** is spilled, take the following steps:

- ▶ Evacuate personnel and secure and control entrance to the area.
- ▶ Eliminate all ignition sources.
- ▶ Cover and mix in with dry sand, earth or other noncombustible material and place into sealed, dry 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 **Sodium Dithionite** 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 **Sodium Dithionite** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.

- ▶ Exposure to MOISTURE, MOIST AIR, WATER or elevated TEMPERATURES (over 140°F (60°C)) causes **Sodium Dithionite** to decompose. Decomposition produces enough heat to ignite combustibles.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** may react violently or explosively with SODIUM CHLORITE and other OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE).
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite** reacts with STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC) to form toxic gases.
- ▶ **Sodium Dithionite**, in combination with a mixture of ALUMINUM POWDER, POTASSIUM CARBONATE, and BENZALDEHYDE, resulted in an explosion.
- ▶ Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from AIR, LIGHT and WATER and protect from HEAT.
- ▶ Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where **Sodium Dithionite** is used, handled, or stored in a manner that could create a potential fire or explosion hazard.
- ▶ Use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings wherever **Sodium Dithionite** is used, handled, manufactured, or stored.
- ▶ Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of **Sodium Dithionite**.

### 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>

***The Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets 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** (AEGs) 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.

The **critical temperature** is the temperature above which a gas cannot be liquefied, regardless of the pressure applied.

**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 AEGs 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 *Air*), 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: **SODIUM DITHIONITE**

Synonyms: Sodium Hydrosulfite

CAS No: 7775-14-6

Molecular Formula: Na<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>

RTK Substance No: 1697

Description: White to grayish, crystalline powder with a slight rotten egg odor

### HAZARD DATA

Hazard Rating	Firefighting	Reactivity
<p><b>2 - Health</b></p> <p><b>1 - Fire</b></p> <p><b>2 - Reactivity</b></p> <p><b>DOT#:</b> UN 1384</p> <p><b>ERG Guide #:</b> 135</p> <p><b>Hazard Class:</b> 4.2 (Spontaneously Combustible)</p>	<p><b>Sodium Dithionite</b> is REACTIVE and contact with MOIST AIR, MOISTURE, WATER or HEAT can cause <b>Sodium Dithionite</b> to decompose, producing enough heat to ignite combustible materials.</p> <p>Use CO<sub>2</sub> or dry sand for small fires. Use water in flooding quantities for large fires. If flooding quantities are not available, let burn.</p> <p>Monitor container temperature for at least 48-hours to make sure decomposition is not occurring.</p> <p>POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE, including <i>Sulfur Dioxide</i>.</p> <p>CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.</p> <p>Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.</p> <p><b>Sodium Dithionite</b> may form an ignitable dust/air mixture in closed tanks or containers.</p> <p><b>Sodium Dithionite</b> may be ignited by static discharge.</p>	<p>Exposure to MOISTURE, MOIST AIR, WATER or elevated TEMPERATURES (over 140°F (60°C)) causes <b>Sodium Dithionite</b> to decompose. Decomposition produces enough heat to ignite combustibles.</p> <p><b>Sodium Dithionite</b> may react violently or explosively with SODIUM CHLORITE and other OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE).</p> <p><b>Sodium Dithionite</b> reacts with STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC) to form toxic gases.</p> <p><b>Sodium Dithionite</b>, in combination with a mixture of ALUMINUM POWDER, POTASSIUM CARBONATE, and BENZALDEHYDE, resulted in an explosion.</p>

### SPILL/LEAKS

**Isolation Distance:**

Dry Spill: 25 meters (75 feet)  
 Water Spill: 30 meters (100 feet)  
 Fire: 800 meters (1/2 mile)

Cover and mix in with dry sand, earth or other noncombustible material and place into sealed, dry containers for disposal.  
 Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of **Sodium Dithionite**.  
 Ventilate and wash area after clean-up is complete.  
 DO NOT wash into sewer.  
**Sodium Dithionite** is harmful to the aquatic environment.

### PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

**Odor Threshold:** Rotten egg odor  
**Flash Point:** 212°F (100°C)  
**Vapor Density:** 3.6 (air = 1)  
**Specific Gravity:** 1.4 (water = 1)  
**Water Solubility:** Soluble (Decomposes)  
**Melting Point:** 158° to 266°F (70° to 130°C)  
**Molecular Weight:** 174.1

### EXPOSURE LIMITS

No occupational exposure limits have been established for **Sodium Dithionite**.

The Protective Action Criteria values are:  
 PAC-1 = 30 mg/m<sup>3</sup>    PAC-2 = 50 mg/m<sup>3</sup>  
 PAC-3 = 250 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

### PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Gloves:** Neoprene, Natural Rubber and Polyvinyl Chloride  
**Coveralls:** Tyvek®  
**Respirator:** SCBA

### HEALTH EFFECTS

**Eyes:** Irritation and burns  
**Skin:** Irritation and burns  
**Inhalation:** Nose, throat and lung irritation, with coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath  
 Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, and convulsions.

### FIRST AID AND DECONTAMINATION

**Remove** the person from exposure.  
**Flush** eyes with large amounts of water for at least 15 minutes. Remove contact lenses if worn.  
**Quickly** remove contaminated clothing and wash contaminated skin with large amounts of soap and water.  
**Begin** artificial respiration if breathing has stopped and CPR if necessary.  
**Transfer** promptly to a medical facility.