



Common Name: **METHYL ALCOHOL**

Synonyms: Carbinol; Wood Alcohol

Chemical Name: Methanol

Date: September 2011

Revision: April 2016

CAS Number: 67-56-1

RTK Substance Number: 1222

DOT Number: UN 1230

### Description and Use

**Methyl Alcohol** is a colorless liquid with a slightly sweet, strong odor. It is used as a solvent and alternative motor fuel, and in making other chemicals, windshield washer fluid and de-icing solutions.

- ▶ **ODOR THRESHOLD = 100 to 1,500 ppm**
- ▶ Odor thresholds vary greatly. Do not rely on odor alone to determine potentially hazardous exposures.

### Reasons for Citation

- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** is on the Right to Know Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by OSHA, ACGIH, DOT, NIOSH, IRIS, 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 15 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. Seek medical attention.

#### 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	NJDHSS	NFPA
<b>HEALTH</b>	-	1
<b>FLAMMABILITY</b>	-	3
<b>REACTIVITY</b>	-	0
TERATOGEN FLAMMABLE POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE		

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

- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** can affect you when inhaled and by passing through the skin.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** may be a TERATOGEN. HANDLE WITH EXTREME CAUTION.
- ▶ Contact can cause skin irritation. Prolonged or repeated contact can cause a skin rash, dryness and redness.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** can irritate the eyes and can cause blurred vision and blindness.
- ▶ Inhaling **Methyl Alcohol** can irritate the nose, throat and lungs causing coughing, wheezing and/or shortness of breath.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- ▶ Exposure to high concentrations can cause headache, dizziness, drowsiness, fatigue, loss of consciousness and death.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** may damage the liver, kidneys and nervous system.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** is a FLAMMABLE LIQUID and a DANGEROUS FIRE HAZARD.

#### Workplace Exposure Limits

OSHA: The legal airborne permissible exposure limit (PEL) is **200 ppm** averaged over an 8-hour workshift.

NIOSH: The recommended airborne exposure limit (REL) is **200 ppm** averaged over a 10-hour workshift and **250 ppm**, not to be exceeded during any 15-minute work period.

ACGIH: The threshold limit value (TLV) is **200 ppm** averaged over an 8-hour workshift and **250 ppm** as a STEL (short-term exposure limit).

- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** may be a TERATOGEN in humans. All contact with this chemical 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 (<http://nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/right-to-know>) 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 **Methyl Alcohol**:

- ▶ Contact can cause skin irritation.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** can irritate the eyes and can cause blurred vision and blindness.
- ▶ Inhaling **Methyl Alcohol** can irritate the nose, throat and lungs causing coughing, wheezing and/or shortness of breath.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- ▶ Exposure to high concentrations can cause headache, dizziness, drowsiness, fatigue, loss of consciousness and death.

### Chronic Health Effects

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

### Cancer Hazard

- ▶ There is no evidence that **Methyl Alcohol** causes cancer in animals. This is based on test results presently available to the NJDHSS from published studies.

### Reproductive Hazard

- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** may be a TERATOGEN in humans since it is a teratogen in animals.

### Other Effects

- ▶ Prolonged or repeated contact can cause a skin rash, dryness, redness and cracking of the skin.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** may damage the liver, kidneys and nervous system.

## Medical

### Medical Testing

For frequent or potentially high exposure (half the PEL or greater), the following are recommended before beginning work and at regular times after that:

- ▶ Liver function tests

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

- ▶ Kidney function tests
- ▶ Exam of the nervous system
- ▶ Exam of the eye and vision.

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 **Methyl Alcohol**.

## 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 **Methyl Alcohol** 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 **Methyl Alcohol**. Wear personal protective equipment made from material that 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.
- ▶ The recommended glove materials for **Methyl Alcohol** are Butyl, Viton and Barrier®.
- ▶ The recommended protective clothing materials for **Methyl Alcohol** are Tychem® SL, CSM and TK; and Trellechem® HPS and VPS, or the equivalent.
- ▶ All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.

### Eye Protection

- ▶ Wear indirect vent goggles when working with liquids that may splash, spray or mist. A face shield is also required if the liquid is severely irritating or corrosive to the skin and eyes.
- ▶ Do not wear contact lenses when working with this substance.

### 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 **200 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 or an emergency escape air cylinder.
- ▶ Exposure to **6,000 ppm** is immediately dangerous to life and health. If the possibility of exposure above **6,000 ppm** exists, use a NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode equipped with 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).

- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** is a FLAMMABLE LIQUID.
- ▶ Use dry chemical, CO<sub>2</sub>, water spray or alcohol-resistant foam as extinguishing agents.
- ▶ Water may not be effective in fighting fires.
- ▶ POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE.
- ▶ CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.
- ▶ Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.
- ▶ Vapor is heavier than air and may travel a distance to cause a fire or explosion far from the source and flash back.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** may form an ignitable vapor/air mixture in closed tanks or containers.

### 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 **Methyl Alcohol** is spilled or leaked, take the following steps:

- ▶ Evacuate personnel and secure and control entrance to the area.
- ▶ Eliminate all ignition sources.
- ▶ Absorb liquids in dry sand, earth, or a similar material and place into sealed containers for disposal.
- ▶ Ventilate area of spill or leak.
- ▶ Keep **Methyl Alcohol** out of confined spaces, such as sewers, because of the possibility of an explosion.
- ▶ It may be necessary to contain and dispose of **Methyl Alcohol** 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 **Methyl Alcohol** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.

- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** reacts violently or explosively with OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); ALKYL ALUMINUM SALTS; ACETYL BROMIDE; CHROMIC ANHYDRIDE; MIXTURES of CHLOROFORM and SODIUM HYDROXIDE; PHOSPHORUS TRIOXIDE; MIXTURES of SULFURIC ACID and HYDROGEN PEROXIDE; ISOCYANATES; METALS (such as LEAD, MAGNESIUM and POTASSIUM); and NITRIC ACID.
- ▶ **Methyl Alcohol** attacks some PLASTICS, RUBBERS and COATINGS.
- ▶ Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from HEAT SOURCES.
- ▶ Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where **Methyl Alcohol** is used, handled, or stored.
- ▶ Metal containers involving the transfer of **Methyl Alcohol** should be grounded and bonded.
- ▶ Use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings wherever **Methyl Alcohol** is used, handled, manufactured, or stored.
- ▶ Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of **Methyl Alcohol**.

### Occupational Health Information Resources

The New Jersey Department of Health and Occupational Health Service, 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.nj.gov](mailto:rtk@doh.nj.gov)  
 Web address:  
<http://nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/right-to-know>

*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: **METHYL ALCOHOL**

Synonyms: Carbinol; Methanol; Wood Alcohol

CAS No: 67-56-1

Molecular Formula: CH<sub>3</sub>OH

RTK Substance No: 1222

Description: Colorless liquid with a slightly sweet, strong odor

## HAZARD DATA

Hazard Rating	Firefighting	Reactivity
<p><b>1 - Health</b></p> <p><b>3 - Fire</b></p> <p><b>0 - Reactivity</b></p> <p><b>DOT#:</b> UN 1268</p> <p><b>ERG Guide #:</b> 131</p> <p><b>Hazard Class:</b> 3 (Flammable liquid)</p>	<p><b>Methyl Alcohol</b> is a FLAMMABLE LIQUID.</p> <p>Use dry chemical, CO<sub>2</sub>, water spray or alcohol-resistant foam as extinguishing agents.</p> <p>Water may not be effective in fighting fires.</p> <p>POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE.</p> <p>CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.</p> <p>Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.</p> <p>Vapor is heavier than air and may travel a distance to cause a fire or explosion far from the source and flash back.</p> <p><b>Methyl Alcohol</b> may form an ignitable vapor/air mixture in closed tanks or containers.</p>	<p><b>Methyl Alcohol</b> reacts violently or explosively with OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); ALKYL ALUMINUM SALTS; ACETYL BROMIDE; CHROMIC ANHYDRIDE; MIXTURES of CHLOROFORM and SODIUM HYDROXIDE; PHOSPHORUS TRIOXIDE; MIXTURES of SULFURIC ACID and HYDROGEN PEROXIDE; ISOCYANATES; METALS (such as LEAD, MAGNESIUM and POTASSIUM); and NITRIC ACID.</p> <p><b>Methyl Alcohol</b> attacks some PLASTICS, RUBBERS and COATINGS.</p>

### SPILL/LEAKS

**Isolation Distance:**

Spill: 50 meters (150 feet)

Fire: 800 meters (1/2 mile)

Absorb liquids in dry sand, earth, or a similar material and place into sealed containers for disposal.

Use only non-sparking tools and equipment.

Metal containers involving the transfer of **Methyl Alcohol** should be grounded and bonded.

Keep **Methyl Alcohol** out of confined spaces, such as sewers, because of the possibility of an explosion.

### PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

<b>Odor Threshold:</b>	100 to 1,500 ppm
<b>Flash Point:</b>	52°F (11°C)
<b>LEL:</b>	6%
<b>UEL:</b>	36%
<b>Auto Ignition Temp:</b>	867°F (464°C)
<b>Vapor Density:</b>	1.1 (air = 1)
<b>Vapor Pressure:</b>	96 mm Hg at 68°F (20°C)
<b>Specific Gravity:</b>	0.8 (water = 1)
<b>Water Solubility:</b>	Soluble
<b>Boiling Point:</b>	147°F (64°C)
<b>Melting Point:</b>	-144°F (-97.8°C)
<b>Ionization Potential:</b>	10.84 eV
<b>Molecular Weight:</b>	32.04

### EXPOSURE LIMITS

**OSHA:** 200 ppm, 8-hr TWA

**NIOSH:** 200 ppm, 10-hr TWA; 250 ppm Ceiling

**ACGIH:** 200 ppm, 8-hr TWA; 250 ppm Ceiling

**IDLH:** 6,000 ppm

The Protective Action Criteria values are:

PAC-1 = 530 ppm    PAC-2 = 2,100 ppm

PAC-3 = 7,200 ppm

### PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Gloves:** Butyl, Viton and Barrier® (>8-hr breakthrough)

**Coveralls:** Tychem® SL, CSM and TK; Trelchem® HPS and VPS (>8-hr breakthrough)

**Use turn out gear or flash protection if ignition/fire is the greatest hazard.**

**Respirator:** >200 ppm - SCBA

### HEALTH EFFECTS

**Eyes:** Irritation, blurred vision and blindness.

Irritation

**Skin:** Nose, throat and lung irritation with coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath

**Inhalation:** Headache, dizziness, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and death

### 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. Seek medical attention.

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

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

**Transfer** promptly to a medical facility.