



# Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet

Right to Know

Common Name: **NITROCELLULOSE**

Synonyms: Collodion; Cellulose Nitrate Solution; Pyroxylin Solution

Chemical Name: Cellulose, Nitrate

Date: April 2001      Revision: February 2010

CAS Number: 9004-70-0

RTK Substance Number: 1366

DOT Number: UN 2556 (solid)  
UN 2059 (solution)

## Description and Use

**Nitrocellulose** is a white, granular chip or fibrous material, which is usually kept wet in water or an alcohol solution. It is used for automobile lacquers, and in printing inks, explosives and rocket propellants.

## Reasons for Citation

- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** 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

- ▶ Remove contaminated clothing and wash contaminated skin with 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
<b>HEALTH</b>	-	2
<b>FLAMMABILITY</b>	-	3 (Nitrocellulose) 4 (Collodion)
<b>REACTIVITY</b>	-	3 (Nitrocellulose) 0 (Collodion)
FLAMMABLE AND REACTIVE EXPLOSIVE WHEN DRY POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE		

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

- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** can affect you when inhaled.
- ▶ Contact can irritate the skin and eyes.
- ▶ Inhaling **Nitrocellulose** can irritate the nose and throat.
- ▶ Exposure can cause headache, dizziness, difficulty breathing and loss of consciousness.
- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** may affect the nervous system.
- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** is FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE and a DANGEROUS FIRE and EXPLOSION HAZARD.

## Workplace Exposure Limits

No occupational exposure limits have been established for **Nitrocellulose**. 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 **Nitrocellulose**:

- ▶ Contact can irritate the skin and eyes.
- ▶ Inhaling **Nitrocellulose** can irritate the nose and throat.
- ▶ Exposure can cause headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, difficulty breathing and loss of consciousness.

### Chronic Health Effects

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

### Cancer Hazard

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

### Other Effects

- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** may affect the nervous system.

## Medical

### Medical Testing

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

- ▶ Exam of the nervous system

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).

## 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 **Nitrocellulose** may be present, check to make sure that an explosive concentration does not exist.
- ▶ Where possible, transfer **Nitrocellulose** 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 **Nitrocellulose**. 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 Silver Shield®/4H® and Barrier® for gloves, and Tychem® Responder®, and Trelchem® VPS, 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.
- ▶ Wear protective clothing made of material that does not generate static electricity.

### Eye Protection

- ▶ For **solid Nitrocellulose** wear eye protection with side shields or goggles.
- ▶ Wear indirect-vent, impact and splash resistant goggles when working with liquids.

### 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).

- ▶ For **solid Nitrocellulose**, use a NIOSH approved negative pressure, air-purifying, particulate filter respirator with an N, R or P95 filter. More protection is provided by a full facepiece respirator than by a half-mask respirator, and even greater protection is provided by a powered-air purifying respirator.
- ▶ Leave the area immediately if (1) while wearing a filter or cartridge respirator you can smell, taste, or otherwise detect **Nitrocellulose**, (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).

- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** is a FLAMMABLE LIQUID, or an EXPLOSIVE when dry, and can be ignited or exploded with HEAT, SPARKS, or FRICTION.
- ▶ For **Nitrocellulose in solution**, use dry chemical or CO<sub>2</sub> as extinguishing agents.
- ▶ For **dry Nitrocellulose**, use water spray or fog.
- ▶ POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE, including *Nitrogen Oxides* and *Hydrogen Cyanides*.
- ▶ CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.
- ▶ Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.

**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 **Nitrocellulose** 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.
- ▶ For *dry Nitrocellulose*, thoroughly wet with water, sweep-up, and place into tightly closed, water tight containers.
- ▶ Ventilate and wash area after clean-up is complete.
- ▶ Keep **Nitrocellulose** out of confined spaces, such as sewers, because of the possibility of an explosion.
- ▶ It may be necessary to contain and dispose of **Nitrocellulose** 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 **Nitrocellulose** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.

- ▶ **Nitrocellulose**, when dry, is shock sensitive and can ignite spontaneously and explode when exposed to HEAT; FLAMES; IGNITION SOURCES; AIR; SUNLIGHT or OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE).
- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** is not compatible with ACETYL PEROXIDE; BROMOAZIDE; STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC); STRONG BASES (such as SODIUM HYDROXIDE and POTASSIUM HYDROXIDE); METALS; METAL SALTS; METAL OXIDES; and AMINES.
- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** attacks some RUBBER, COATINGS and PLASTICS.
- ▶ Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from COMBUSTIBLES, SUNLIGHT, HEAT and any IGNITION SOURCE.
- ▶ Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where **Nitrocellulose** is used, handled, or stored.
- ▶ Metal containers involving the transfer of **Nitrocellulose** should be grounded and bonded.
- ▶ Use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings wherever **Nitrocellulose** is used, handled, manufactured, or stored.
- ▶ Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of **Nitrocellulose**.
- ▶ **Nitrocellulose** may accumulate static electricity when being filled into properly grounded containers.

**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 (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.

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 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 *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: **NITROCELLULOSE**

Synonyms: Collodion; Cellulose Nitrate Solution; Pyroxylin Solution

CAS No: 9004-70-0

Molecular Formula: Varies

RTK Substance No: 1366

Description: White, granular chip or fibrous material, which is usually in a water or alcohol solution

### HAZARD DATA

Hazard Rating	Firefighting	Reactivity
<p><b>2 - Health</b></p> <p><b>3 - Fire</b> (<i>Nitrocellulose</i>)</p> <p><b>4 - Fire</b> (<i>Collodion</i>)</p> <p><b>3 - Reactivity</b> (<i>Nitrocellulose</i>)</p> <p><b>0 - Reactivity</b> (<i>Collodion</i>)</p> <p><b>DOT#:</b> UN 2556 (<i>Solid</i>) UN 2059 (<i>Solution</i>)</p> <p><b>ERG Guide #:</b> 113 (<i>Solid</i>) 127 (<i>Solution</i>)</p> <p><b>Hazard Class:</b> 4.1 (<i>Flammable solid</i>) 3 (<i>Flammable liquid</i>)</p>	<p><b>Nitrocellulose</b> is a <b>FLAMMABLE LIQUID</b>, or an <b>EXPLOSIVE</b> when dry, and can be ignited or exploded with <b>HEAT, SPARKS, or FRICTION</b>. For <b>Nitrocellulose in solution</b>, use dry chemical or CO<sub>2</sub> as extinguishing agents. For <b>dry Nitrocellulose</b>, use water spray or fog. <b>POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE</b>, including <i>Nitrogen Oxides</i> and <i>Hydrogen Cyanides</i>. <b>CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE</b>. Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.</p>	<p><b>Nitrocellulose</b>, when dry, is shock sensitive and can ignite spontaneously and explode when exposed to <b>HEAT; FLAMES; IGNITION SOURCES; AIR; SUNLIGHT</b> or <b>OXIDIZING AGENTS</b> (such as <b>PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE</b> and <b>FLUORINE</b>).</p> <p><b>Nitrocellulose</b> is not compatible with <b>ACETYL PEROXIDE; BROMOAZIDE; STRONG ACIDS</b> (such as <b>HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC</b> and <b>NITRIC</b>); <b>STRONG BASES</b> (such as <b>SODIUM HYDROXIDE</b> and <b>POTASSIUM HYDROXIDE</b>); <b>METALS; METAL SALTS; METAL OXIDES</b>; and <b>AMINES</b>.</p> <p><b>Nitrocellulose</b> attacks some <b>RUBBER, COATINGS</b> and <b>PLASTICS</b>. <b>Nitrocellulose</b> may accumulate static electricity when being filled into properly grounded containers.</p>

### SPILL/LEAKS

**Isolation Distance:**

Small Spill: 100 meters (330 feet)

Large Spill: 500 meters (1/3 mile)

Fire: 800 meters (1/2 mile)

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

For **dry Nitrocellulose**, thoroughly wet with water, sweep-up, and place into tightly closed, water tight containers.

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

Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of **Nitrocellulose**.

### PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

<b>Odor Threshold:</b>	Odorless to <i>Ether</i> or <i>Alcohol</i> -like
<b>Flash Point:</b>	55°F (13°C) ( <i>Solid</i> ) <0°F (<-18°C) ( <i>Solution</i> )
<b>LEL:</b>	1.9% ( <i>Solution</i> )
<b>UEL:</b>	48% ( <i>Solution</i> )
<b>Auto Ignition Temp:</b>	338°F (170°C) ( <i>Solution</i> )
<b>Vapor Density:</b>	2.6 ( <i>Solution</i> ) air = 1
<b>Specific Gravity:</b>	1.66 ( <i>Solid</i> ) 0.8 ( <i>Solution</i> ) (water = 1)
<b>Boiling Point:</b>	95°F (35°C) ( <i>Solution</i> )
<b>Molecular Weight:</b>	459 to 594

### EXPOSURE LIMITS

The Protective Action Criteria values are:

PAC-1 = 60 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

PAC-2 = 400 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

PAC-3 = 500 mg/m<sup>3</sup>

### PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

<b>Gloves:</b>	SilverShield®/4H® and Barrier® (>8-hr breakthrough for <i>Nitro compounds</i> and <i>Ethyl Ether</i> )
<b>Coveralls:</b>	Tychem® Responder and Trelchem VPS (>8-hr breakthrough for <i>Nitro compounds</i> and <i>Ethyl Ether</i> ) (Use safety shoes with antistatic base and flash protection at >10% of the LEL)
<b>Respirator:</b>	SCBA

### HEALTH EFFECTS

<b>Eyes:</b>	Irritation
<b>Skin:</b>	Irritation
<b>Inhalation:</b>	Nose and throat irritation Headache, dizziness, difficulty breathing and loss of consciousness

### FIRST AID AND DECONTAMINATION

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