BEFORE THE TALK PREPARATION TIPS

1. Pass around the Attendance Sheet.
2. Be prepared to discuss any carcinogens used at your location and potential exposure issues.
   - Discuss safe work practices and policies.
   - Review any PPE requirements and safe use, care and disposal of PPE.
3. Discuss reporting procedures for concerns about exposure to carcinogens and other hazardous chemicals.
   - What to report.
   - Who to report to.
   - How to report – verbally, written, via email or via the intranet.
4. Suggested readings and videos:
   - https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/carcinogens/solutions.html
   - http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/occupational_cancer.html

NOTES

AFTER THE TALK CHECKLIST

- ■ Provided extra training to workers who did poorly on quiz
  Date: _____
- ■ Observed workers
  Date: _____
- ■ Refresher training
  Date: _____
- ■ Other (describe)

_____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Meeting conducted by: _____

MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY: Each participant is to sign below, for record kept on file.

Answers to T201701-01 Quiz: **1. True, 2. B, 3. False, 4. True**

Carcinogens – Cancer Causing Chemicals

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

A carcinogen is any substance that can cause cancer. They are chronic toxins that cause damage after repeated or long-term exposure. For some people, the workplace can be a source of exposure to some carcinogens, such as asbestos, benzene, or formaldehyde.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Benzene is a colorless, flammable liquid with a sweet odor. It is among the 20 most widely used chemicals in the United States. It is used mainly as a starting material in making other chemicals, including plastics, lubricants, rubbers, dyes, detergents, drugs, and pesticides. The main route of exposure is through inhalation, but it can also be absorbed through the skin, but because liquid benzene evaporates quickly, this is less common.

Asbestos is a group of naturally occurring minerals that occur naturally as bundles of fibers. These fibers are found in soil and rocks in many parts of the world. There are 2 main types of asbestos and both have been linked to cancer. Most exposures come from inhaling asbestos fibers during the mining and processing of asbestos, when making asbestos-containing products, or when installing asbestos insulation. It can also occur when older buildings are demolished or renovated, or when older asbestos-containing materials begin to break down.

Formaldehyde is a colorless, strong-smelling gas used in making building materials and many household products, including pressed-wood products; glues and adhesives; permanent-press fabrics; paper product coatings; certain insulation materials; and to make other chemicals. When dissolved in water it is called formalin, which is commonly used as an industrial disinfectant, and as a preservative in funeral homes and medical labs. Exposure occurs mainly through inhalation or by absorbing liquids containing formaldehyde through the skin.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. Always follow safe work practices, clean-up and disposal procedures.
2. Wear the right kind of PPE **each and every** time there is the potential for exposure.
3. Stop smoking – benzene and formaldehyde are both found in cigarette smoke.
4. If you are concerned about exposure talk to your safety manager or supervisor.

FINAL WORD

Exposure to carcinogens doesn't have to be deadly. Be informed about the hazards, follow safe work practices and wear your PPE to protect yourself against exposure hazards. ■

Meeting material to go: *Safety meeting materials such as presentation tips, PowerPoint presentations, quiz answers and more are downloadable at* ***www.SafetySmart.com***

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Formalin can be absorbed through the skin.
   ☐True ☐False
2. What is the main route of exposure for asbestos fibers?
   a. Indigestion
   b. Inhalation
   c. Absorption
   d. Congestion
3. If you have a chemical concern, you should wait and see if your supervisor brings it up in the next meeting.
   ☐True ☐False
4. Smoking is a main source of benzene exposure.
   ☐True ☐False

What Would You Do?

You've noticed some new chemicals have been introduced in your work area. You haven't been told what they are, what hazards are associated with them, or what, if any, PPE is required to protect against exposure. What should you do to make sure you're safe on the job?

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