

IN RE: ABRAMS

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THRESHOLD LIMIT VALUES FOR 1966

Adopted at the 28th Annual Meeting of the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 16 - 17, 1966.

The Threshold Limit Values refer to air-borne concentrations of substances and represent conditions under which it is believed that nearly all workers may be repeatedly exposed, day after day, without adverse effect. Because of wide variation in individual susceptibility, exposure of an occasional individual at or even below the threshold limit may not prevent discomfort, aggravation of a pre-existing condition, or occupational illness.

Threshold limits should be used as guides in the control of health hazards and should not be regarded as fine lines between safe and dangerous concentrations. Exceptions are the substances given in Appendix A and certain of the substances given a "C" listing. The values not given a "C" listing refer to time-weighted average concentrations for a normal workday.

The amount by which these concentrations may be exceeded for short periods without injury to health depends upon a number of factors such as the nature of the contaminant, whether very high concentrations even for short periods produce acute poisoning, whether the effects are cumulative, the frequency with which high concentrations occur, and the duration of such periods. All must be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision as to whether a hazardous situation exists. Enlightened industrial hygiene practice inclines toward controlling exposures below the limit rather than maintenance at the limit.

Threshold limits are based on the best available information from industrial experience, from experimental human and animal studies, and when possible, from a combination of the three. The basis on which the values are established may differ from substance to substance; protection against impairment of health may be the guiding factor for some, whereas reasonable freedom from irritation, narcosis, nuisance or other forms of stress may dominate the basis for others. The Committee holds to the opinion that

limits based on physical irritation should be considered no less binding than those based on physical impairment; growing bodies of evidence indicate that physical irritation may promote and accelerate physical impairment.

Documentation of Threshold Limit Values.

A separate companion piece to the TLVs is issued by ACGIH under this title. This publication gives the pertinent scientific information and data with reference to literature sources, that were used to base each limit. Each documentation also contains a statement defining the type of response against which the limit is safeguarding the worker. For a better understanding of the TLVs it is essential that the Documentation be consulted when the TLVs are being used.

Ceiling vs Time-Weighted Average Limits.

Although the time-weighted average concentration provides the most satisfactory, practical way of monitoring air-borne agents for compliance with the limits, there are certain substances for which it is inappropriate. In the latter group are substances which are predominantly fast acting and whose threshold limit is more appropriately based on this particular response. Substances with this type of response are best controlled by a ceiling "C" limit that should not be exceeded. It is implicit in these definitions that the manner of sampling to determine compliance with the limits for each group must differ; a single brief sample, that is applicable to a "C" limit, is not appropriate to the time-weighted limit: here, a sufficient number of samples are needed to permit a time-weighted average concentration throughout a complete cycle of operations or throughout the work shift.

Whereas the ceiling limit places a definite boundary which concentrations should not be permitted to exceed, the time-weighted average limit requires an explicit limit to the excursions that are permissible above the listed values. The magnitude of these excursions may be pegged to the magnitude of the threshold limit by an appropriate factor shown in Appendix C. It should be noted that the same factors are used

by the Committee in making a judgment whether to include or exclude a substance for a "C" listing.

"Skin" Notation. Listed substances followed by the designation "Skin" refer to the potential contribution to the over-all exposure by the cutaneous route including mucous membranes and eye, either by air-borne, or more particularly, by direct contact with the substance. Vehicles can alter skin absorption. This attention-calling designation is intended to suggest appropriate measures for the prevention of cutaneous absorption so that the threshold limit is not invalidated.

Mixtures. Special consideration should be given also to the application of these values in assessing the health hazards which may be associated with exposure to mixtures of two or more substances. A brief discussion of basic considerations involved in developing threshold limit values for mixtures, and methods for their development, amplified by specific examples are given in Appendix B.

"Inert" or Nuisance Particulates. A number of dusts or particulates that occur in the working environment ordinarily produce no specific effects upon prolonged inhalation. Some insoluble substances are classed as inert (e.g. iron and steel dusts, cement, silicon carbide, titanium dioxide, cellulose); others may be soluble (starch, soluble oils, calcium carbonate) but are of such a low order of activity that in concentrations ordinarily encountered do not cause physiologic impairment; still others may be rapidly eliminated or destroyed by the body (vegetable oils, glycerine, sucrose). In the case of the insoluble substances, there may be some accumulation in the respiratory passages. In the case of the soluble substances, this accumulation will ordinarily be temporary but may interfere to some extent with respiratory processes. Hence, it is desirable to control the concentrations of such particulates in the air breathed by any individual, in keeping with good industrial hygiene practice.

A threshold limit of $15\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$, or 50 mppcf, whichever is less, is recommended for substan-