

During the past two months, surveys were conducted to evaluate exposures to organic mercury dust at several seed-treating establishments. Either methyl mercury 2,3-dihydroxy propyl mercaptide or methyl mercury dicyandiamide is used in the treatment of barley or wheat. Both atmospheric and urine samples were collected. Initial results indicated that employees were receiving excessive exposures to organic mercury (threshold limit value 0.01 milligram per cubic meter of air), particularly in areas where no control measures are utilized. One of the companies contacted the equipment manufacturer and, as a result, the manufacturer designed local exhaust ventilating equipment for the machine and for the machines they produce. The ventilation was subsequently installed.

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A report reached a regional office that a dairy farmer had received a severe exposure to an irritating gas while cleaning and sanitizing a milk storage tank on his farm. Investigation disclosed that the incident occurred when the farmer, on the advice of a neighbor, put about a gallon each of acid and sodium hypochlorite solution in the tank before scrubbing it to give what he described as a "good cleaning". Chlorine gas was generated and dispersed into the air of the small milk house and the farmer probably received a significant exposure. He stated that he had difficulty getting his breath for several hours, but did not consult a physician.

Acid and sodium hypochlorite solution are normally used in separate steps in the cleaning and sanitizing procedures for milking equipment and storage tanks on dairy farms. If used as directed, these materials should create no problem. As an extra precaution, the dairy companies that collect milk in the area were asked to warn farmers not to mix acid cleaners with chlorinated sanitizers.

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While traveling to the site of a stone drilling operation to conduct a noise survey, the sound pressure level in a 1964 state car was determined. The overall level ranged from 88 to 95 decibels depending on the road conditions and speed. These noise levels are far greater than expected. An octave band analysis showed most of the noise to be concentrated in the low frequency bands (75 to 300 cycles per second) and therefore not seriously objectionable.

The Division of Occupational Health would like to fill its vacancy for an Occupational Health Physician at the Harrisburg offices. The position is under Civil Service and the salary range is \$12,075 - \$16,170, with 3 weeks annual leave and 3 weeks annual sick leave. Some travel is necessary and a driver's license is required. For details contact Jan Lieben, M.D., Director, Division of Occupational Health, Pennsylvania Department of Health, P.O. Box 90, Harrisburg 17120.

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