

HYDROCHLORIC ACID, ANHYDROUS

HCl

ANHYDROUS HCL IS A COLORLESS GAS (OR LIQUID UNDER PRESSURE) WHICH FUMES STRONGLY IN MOIST AIR. IN CONTACT WITH WATER, IT FORMS A VERY STRONG LIQUID ACID. SINCE THE HUMAN BODY IS 80 - 85% WATER, AHCL CONTACT WITH THE EYE, SKIN, OR MUCOUS MEMBRANES RESULTS IN INTENSE PAIN AND SEVERE BURNS UNLESS THE ACID IS IMMEDIATELY DILUTED BY FLUSHING WITH LARGE QUANTITIES OF WATER. GET MEDICAL ATTENTION WHENEVER CONTACT HAS OCCURRED.

INHALATION OF AHCL PRODUCES INTENSE COUGHING, BURNING OF THE RESPIRATORY TRACT, AND A CHOKING SENSATION. THE BODY RESISTS BREATHING AHCL FUMES IN SPITE OF THE NEED FOR AIR, CAUSING UNCONSCIOUSNESS UNLESS FRESH AIR IS IMMEDIATELY MADE AVAILABLE. THUS, EVACUATION FROM THE CONTAMINATED AREA IS MANDATORY TO PREVENT UNCONSCIOUSNESS. PROLONGED EXPOSURE CAN BE FATAL. EXPOSURE TO ONLY ABOUT 2/10 OF 1% (1500 TO 2000 PPM) IS LETHAL IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS. IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS LEAK OR SPILL, SUPPLIED AIR IS A NECESSITY.

AHCL VAPORS RAPIDLY ABSORB WATER FROM THE AIR, FORMING FINE DROPLETS OF HCL WHICH ARE VISIBLE AS THE WHITE FUMES ASSOCIATED WITH A RELEASE OF AHCL. EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION IN APPROACHING APPARENT "STEAM" LEAKS IN UNFAMILIAR AREAS.