



Spring newsletter

EPA Approves California's Efforts to Become Nation's First PERC-Free Dry Cleaning State

AIHA® Comments on Proposed Noise Interpretation

NIOSH Releases Beryllium Alert

OSHA Produces New Training Video on Respiratory Protection for Healthcare Workers

OSHA Directive Clarifies PPE Requirements

AIHA® Comments on Proposed Noise Interpretation

In comments released Feb. 11, AIHA [expressed](#) support for the recently [withdrawn](#) OSHA proposal to reinterpret the meaning of "feasible engineering or administrative controls" for workplace noise. Currently, feasible engineering and administrative noise control levels have been enforced by OSHA only when workers are exposed to eight-hour, time-weighted average levels of 100 dB (A) or greater. This level of protection is lower than other recognized standards, such as the NIOSH standard, which calls for controls at 85 dB (A) and permits exposures to 100 dB (A) for only 15 minutes a day.

AIHA supports the revised standard because it embraces the concept of "Hierarchy Controls," brings the noise standard in line with other standards, and places a more appropriate level of reliance on hearing conservation programs to mitigate noise exposure.

[Read more information from OSHA about hearing conservation and noise control.](#)

- From AIHA Weekly E-ssential Connection, February 16, 2011

NIOSH Releases Beryllium Alert

NIOSH recently published an alert with recommendations for workers exposed to particles, fumes, mists or solutions from beryllium-containing materials. In "[Preventing Sensitization and Disease from Beryllium Exposure](#)," NIOSH presents case studies, resources and suggestions for both employers and employees who work with beryllium-containing materials.

The NIOSH recommendations provide guidance on how workers can avoid beryllium sensitization, chronic beryllium disease and lung cancer through different training methods, cleaning procedures and medical surveillance. The alert also describes actions necessary to identify workers exposed to beryllium who may not be aware that they have been exposed, improve protective measures for exposed workers, reduce and minimize general exposures and the number of exposed workers when possible, educate workers on the dangers of working with beryllium, ascertain the characteristics of exposures, and identify industrial and occupational sectors that use beryllium and target them for prevention efforts.

- From AIHA Weekly E-ssential Connection, February 16, 2011

OSHA Produces New Training Video on Respiratory Protection for Healthcare Workers

OSHA has produced a new training [video](#) for healthcare employers and workers that explains the proper use of respirators and the procedures to follow to assure that respirators protect workers from airborne hazards in healthcare settings. The 33-minute video explains the major components of a respiratory protection program including fit-testing, medical evaluations, training and maintenance. The video also discusses the difference between respirators and surgical masks, features a segment on common respiratory hazards found in healthcare settings, and demonstrates how respirator use helps protect workers from exposure to airborne chemicals. See the [news release](#) for more information on this video and visit OSHA's [Safety and Health Topics: Respiratory Protection](#) page to learn more about respirator safety and health.

- From Federal OSHA [QuickTakes](#) February 15, 2011 · Volume 10, Issue 4



EPA Approves California's Efforts to Become Nation's First PERC-Free Dry Cleaning State

Contact Information: Francisco Arcaute, (213) 244-1815, Cell (213) 798-1404, arcaute.francisco@epa.gov

Hazardous dry cleaning chemical to be removed by 2023

(3/7/11) SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved California's regulations banning the use of the toxic air contaminant perchloroethylene (PERC) from the state's dry cleaning operations by 2023. This action means that the current federal regulations will be replaced with California's more stringent approach, which now can be enforced by the federal EPA and citizens of California.

OSHA Directive Clarifies PPE Requirements

OSHA issued a directive Feb. 10 to provide guidance on personal protective equipment ([PPE](#)) compliance to enforcement officials. [Enforcement Guidance for Personal Protective Equipment in General Industry](#) replaces *Inspection Guidelines for 29 CFR 1910 Subpart I, the revised Personal Protective Equipment Standards for General Industry*, which was issued in June 1995.

New information in the directive includes clarification of the type of PPE that employers are required to provide to workers for free and when PPE must be supplied by the employer. The directive also updates enforcement policies for PPE based on decisions by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission and other courts, and helps employers know which PPE to use to comply with current consensus standards.

In November 2007, OSHA issued a final [rule](#) that required employers in general industry, shipyards, longshoring, marine terminals and construction to provide PPE at no cost to their employees. OSHA updated its PPE standards in September 2009 to make them more congruent with current consensus standards.

[Read OSHA's press release on its PPE enforcement guidance directive.](#)

- From AIHA Weekly E-ssential Connection, February 23, 2011

PERC, a possible human carcinogen, is a man-made liquid solvent often used in the dry cleaning industry, in textile mill operations, by chlorofluorocarbon producers, for vapor degreasing and in metal cleaning operations. The dry cleaning industry is a leading user of PERC in the U.S.

"We applaud California's efforts to rid its dry cleaning industry of this dangerous toxin," said Jared Blumenfeld, the EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "The state's approach gives consumers healthier dry cleaning alternatives."

According to California's Air Resources Board, the estimated number of PERC-using machines has been steadily dropping from 4670 machines in 2003 to 2000 machines in 2009. Meanwhile, the estimated number of wet cleaning and CO2 machines – which use less toxic cleaning methods – has almost tripled from 90 machines in 2003 to 253 machines in 2009.

EPA's Toxic Reporting Inventory database reports that more than 107,043 pounds of PERC were released to the environment in California in 2009, mostly through air emissions.

Exposure to PERC can occur in the workplace or in the environment following releases to air, water, land, or groundwater. Exposure can also occur when people use products containing PERC, spend time in dry cleaning facilities that use PERC, live next to dry cleaning facilities, or bring dry cleaned garments into their homes. Once in the body, PERC can remain stored in fat tissue. In addition to being a possible human carcinogen, exposure to PERC is also associated with chronic, non-cancer health effects, including liver and kidney damage in rodents, and neurological effects in humans.

California's Airborne Toxic Control Measure for dry cleaning operations implements a ban on the use of PERC in dry cleaning operations in California. All remaining PERC dry cleaning machines must be removed from service by January 1, 2023. The California Air Resources Board identified PERC as a toxic air contaminant in 1991, and adopted the current Airborne Toxic Control Measure regulating PERC dry cleaning operations in 2007.

For more information on the state's Dry Cleaning program, please visit: www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/dryclean/dryclean.htm

For more information on EPA's dry cleaning regulations, please visit: epa.gov/drycleaningrule/basic.html

- From U.S. EPA News Releases from Region 9, March 7, 2011



Report: Millions at Risk From Hydrofluoric Acid

Fifty oil refineries in the U.S. use a deadly toxic acid that could harm millions if released, according to an investigation by the Center for Public Integrity and ABC News. In a Feb. 24 [article](#), the Center reports that 50 of the nation's 148 refineries use hydrofluoric acid (HF), a catalyst used to produce high-octane gasoline, despite years of warnings that it could lead to mass casualties.

OSHA Commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

March 25, 2011, is the 100th anniversary of the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire, which killed 146 workers in a New York City garment factory. As [OSHA celebrates 40 years](#) of protecting workers, we remember the victims of this terrible tragedy and the advocates and journalists who exposed the indisputable, overwhelming evidence that the fire and the deaths were preventable. OSHA has created a [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Web page](#) where you can learn more about this tragic event that led to a sustained legacy of reform that helped pave the way for OSHA's 40 years of ensuring safe and healthful workplaces.

- From Federal OSHA [QuickTakes](#) March 1, 2011 • Volume 10, Issue 5

Evidence of the dangers of HF first emerged during an experiment at the Nevada Test Site in 1986. The experiment showed that HF released accidentally under conditions similar to those in a refinery can travel miles downwind in lethal concentrations. In 1993, EPA stressed the hazards of HF in a [report to Congress](#), but legislation that would force companies to use alternatives to HF has not been adopted. Some companies have begun using a modified form of HF, which still poses a threat to workers and communities but does not travel as far. According to the Center, at least 16 million Americans live in areas that would be affected if HF were released.

In 1987, an HF-related accident at a Marathon Petroleum Company refinery in Texas City, Texas, resulted in a release of thousands of pounds of acid over 44 hours, contaminating residential areas. More than 1,000 people went to the hospital with skin, eye, nose, throat and lung irritation, and 4,000 residents were evacuated.

View the [World News with Diane Sawyer](#) and [Nightline](#) reports on the investigation.

- From AIHA Weekly E-ssential Connection, March 2, 2011

Shift Work May Lead to Long-Term Health Effects, According to an EU-Funded Study

A recent [study](#) conducted by European Union (EU)-funded researchers working in Denmark and Germany suggests that night shift work may be detrimental to worker health. According to the three-year study, working at night causes the internal body clock to become unbalanced and could lead to numerous metabolic and psychological disorders.

In their research on the influence that shift work, sleep quality and nutrition have on metabolic disorders and gene activity, scientists from Christian-Albrechts-Universitaet zu Kiel in Germany and Odense University in Denmark discovered that the body clock imbalance found in shift workers may have a direct effect on their genetic make-up and their genes. Changes in gene activity can lead to a variety of metabolic disorders, which, on a long-term basis, can come with an assortment of illnesses, including psychological disorders and the inability to work. In addition, scientists found that nutrition and sleep patterns also contribute to the development of metabolic disorders.

- From AIHA Weekly E-ssential Connection, February 23, 2011



Photo-Hygienic



Shot of Aircell Asbestos



**Mechanical Room
Air Supply Fan
Maintenance**



**Soot and Char in Ceiling
Areas**