



Oregon OSHA issues caution alert to salons using hair smoothing products

OSHA fines two companies more than \$560,000 for exposing workers to hexavalent chromium and other hazards

California becomes first state to set safety guidelines for flavoring chemical

*Season's Greetings*

## OSHA Extends Comment Period for Proposed Reinterpretation of Noise Standards

Six weeks after publishing a proposed reinterpretation of noise exposure standards in the [Federal Register](#), OSHA [announced](#) that it would extend the comment period by 90 days. According to OSHA, the proposed reinterpretation would make enforcement of the hearing conservation standard consistent with enforcement of other agency standards by clarifying the term "feasible administrative or engineering controls" as used in OSHA's general industry and construction occupational noise exposure standards.

The new deadline for submitting comments about OSHA's proposed reinterpretation is March 21. Comments may be submitted online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

OSHA's current enforcement policy for noise exposures of less than 100 decibels has allowed many employers to rely upon a hearing conservation program, including the use of hearing protectors such as ear plugs, according to the agency. The proposed reinterpretation would clarify that employers are required to use feasible engineering and administrative controls as the primary means of reducing noise exposure.

From AIHA Weekly E-ssential Connection, December 15, 2010

## Oregon OSHA issues caution alert to salons using hair-smoothing products

[Oregon OSHA](#) issued an alert to Oregon hair salons in October about the presence of formaldehyde in products used to smooth or straighten hair. Oregon OSHA tested more than 100 product samples from more than 50 Oregon salons.

The [sampling results](#)\* confirmed significant levels of formaldehyde in products labeled "formaldehyde free." For example, of the product samples tested by Oregon OSHA, 37 came from bottles of Brazilian Blowout Acai Professional Smoothing Solution, labeled "formaldehyde free." The formaldehyde content in that product averaged 8.68 percent.

Oregon OSHA also monitored the air in several salons to assess worker exposure levels to formaldehyde. "Although it's not clear whether the regulatory level of airborne exposure would be exceeded based on our results, it is clear that the levels are high enough to cause concern," said Michael Wood, Oregon OSHA administrator. "And it is certainly clear that the amount of formaldehyde in many of these products is high enough to trigger the requirements of OSHA's formaldehyde rules."

[Formaldehyde](#) is a sensitizing agent that can cause an immune system response upon initial exposure. It is also a suspected human carcinogen that is linked to nasal cancer and lung cancer. Acute exposure is highly irritating to the eyes, nose, and throat and can make you cough and wheeze. Subsequent exposure may cause severe allergic reactions of the skin, eyes and respiratory tract.

According to OSHA standards, employers using products containing formaldehyde must provide information and training to workers and they must conduct air monitoring to ensure that workers are not exposed to levels above the permissible limit.

See Oregon OSHA's [news release](#)\* and [hazard alert](#)\* for more information and guidance

From Federal OSHA [QuickTakes](#) December 15, 2010 · Volume 9, Issue 24



## OSHA fines two companies more than \$560,000 for exposing workers to hexavalent chromium and other hazards

OSHA cited Aerospace/Defense Coatings of Georgia Inc. and Weatherford International Ltd. with more than 50 health and safety violations and fined the companies \$561,900 for hazards that included exposing workers to [hexavalent chromium](#), a toxic chemical used in pigments, spray paints and coatings.

### Video Highlights Hispanic Worker Risks

NIOSH works with its partners to identify work-related hazards that can affect the growing Hispanic worker population and to provide meaningful information for reducing risks. In a new Spanish-language video presentation on the Dialogo de Costa a Costa news service, NIOSH's Maria Lioce highlights occupational cancer issues.

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=108019999265092&ref=mf>

From NIOSH eNews - December, 2010

OSHA began its inspection of Aerospace/Defense Coatings' Macon, Ga., plant after receiving a worker complaint about health hazards there. Inspectors found that the company willfully disregarded the health of its workers by overexposing them to hexavalent chromium, failing to provide them with adequate respirator protection and personal protective equipment and failing to perform periodic monitoring of hexavalent chromium exposure. OSHA fined the company \$300,400 and cited it with 19 violations.

OSHA began its inspection of Weatherford International's Longview, Texas, facility after receiving a complaint that workers were experiencing headaches and nosebleeds from exposure to hexavalent chromium. Inspectors found that the company willfully jeopardized its workers' health by failing to ensure workers' airborne exposure to hexavalent chromium did not exceed OSHA's Permissible Exposure Limit. OSHA fined the company \$261,500 and cited it with 33 violations.

See the separate news releases on [Aerospace/Defense Coatings](#) and [Weatherford International](#) for more information about the failure of these companies to protect the health and safety of their workers.

From Federal OSHA [QuickTakes](#) December 1, 2010 · Volume 9, Issue 23



## California becomes first state to set safety guidelines for flavoring chemical

**Oakland, CA** – Cal/OSHA continues to be a national leader in worker safety by implementing a new standard today to protect employees who work with diacetyl, a chemical commonly used to give food flavorings a buttery taste. Cal/OSHA, a division of the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), is the only state-OSHA plan to have such a standard.

### National emphasis program and directive are aimed at providing safer conditions for shipyard workers

OSHA extended its [Shipbreaking National Emphasis Program](#) Nov. 4. Shipbreaking is the process of dismantling an obsolete vessel's structure for scrapping or disposal. Shipbreaking workers face hazards including falls from scaffolds and ladders, burns from welding torches, and illnesses from exposure to asbestos, lead and other substances (see OSHA's [Shipbreaking eTool](#) for more information). The Shipbreaking NEP schedules programmed inspections of shipbreaking operations under contract with the U.S. Navy and the Maritime Administration to ensure that workers are being properly protected. The NEP supports OSHA's goal to reduce injuries and illnesses among Latino workers, who make up a significant portion of the shipbreaking workforce.

OSHA also issued a Nov. 4 [directive](#) updating employer requirements to provide shipyard workers with Personal Protective Equipment--such as gloves, safety harnesses, and goggles--needed to safely perform their jobs. Among other things, the directive clarifies the PPE that employers must provide at no cost to their workers and under what circumstances employers must pay for replacement PPE.

From Federal OSHA [QuickTakes](#)  
December 1, 2010 · Volume 9, Issue 23

"The diacetyl standard is the latest example of how Cal/OSHA is on the forefront of worker safety," said DIR Director John C. Duncan. "We have taken the lead on this issue from day one and have worked closely with national medical experts as well as the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health to get to this point. We refuse to wait until more workers suffer serious lung ailments to take action. At this time, not even Federal OSHA has a safety regulation for diacetyl, but we hope that this standard will serve as a model for them to follow."

The new standard, [section 5197](#) of the California Code of Regulations, requires employers covered by the standard to create a regulated area for each process using diacetyl, unless the process is enclosed. Employers must also provide safeguards for employees who work with diacetyl at certain concentrations. These safety measures include creating a written diacetyl control program, periodic monitoring of exposure levels and providing personal protective equipment, respirators, training, and medical surveillance at no cost to employees. The standard goes into effect today.

"Diacetyl, a chemical that is harmless when it occurs naturally or as an ingredient in many of the foods we eat, can be dangerous in industrial settings where flavorings or foods are manufactured because it is used in much higher concentrations that allow it to get into the air that workers breathe," said Cal/OSHA Chief Len Welsh. "Cal/OSHA has issued citations in the past related to exposure to diacetyl, but this comprehensive standard will allow us to better target our enforcement efforts."

Workers from two California flavoring companies that use diacetyl have been diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans -- inflammation and scarring of the small airways that can result in permanent and life threatening narrowing of the airways. A number of employees nationwide who have been exposed to diacetyl have developed the serious respiratory illness which in some cases has resulted in patients being placed on lung transplant wait lists or dying. Symptoms include persistent dry cough, shortness of breath when using extra energy, and wheezing.

Cal/OSHA Consultation also works to protect employees from dangerous food-flavoring chemicals. Consultation initiated its Flavor Industry Safety and Health Evaluation Program (FISHEP) in 2006 to provide assistance to California food flavor manufacturing companies. Consultation staff conducted mandatory onsite evaluations and consultations with 28 California companies that use pure flavoring ingredients to manufacture food flavors.

Cal/OSHA is the employee health and safety division of the Department of Industrial Relations. Employers who want to learn more about Cal/OSHA and how to reduce workplace injuries can get information at the DIR Web site at [www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH](http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH). Employees with work-related questions or complaints can call the California Workers' Information Hotline at (866) 924-9757.

**From California Department of Industrial Relations - News Releases, December 2, 2010**



**Michaels informs national conference of public health professionals about OSHA's efforts to update chemical exposure limits**

OSHA Assistant Secretary David Michaels participated in a panel discussion Nov. 8 in Denver at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting. Representatives of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the U.S. Chemical Safety Board also took part in the panel discussion on efforts to reduce occupational health disparities and advance worker rights and protections.

Michaels shared with the audience OSHA's efforts to address the agency's outdated workplace chemicals [Permissible Exposure Limits](#). Most of OSHA's PELs were adopted when the agency was first created and have remained unchanged even though health data indicates many chemicals pose hazards to workers at levels below those permitted by many of OSHA's PELs. OSHA held a [Web forum](#) in August to solicit nominations on the top chemicals of concern and received more than [130 nominations](#) for OSHA to focus its initial efforts. Using those nominations, input from the OSHA field, and other preliminary information, OSHA and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health will work together on an exercise to categorize the chemicals in a draft list according to their toxic characteristics. Using information learned from this exercise, as well as other research, OSHA's goal is to soon have a final list of chemicals on which to focus the agency's efforts.

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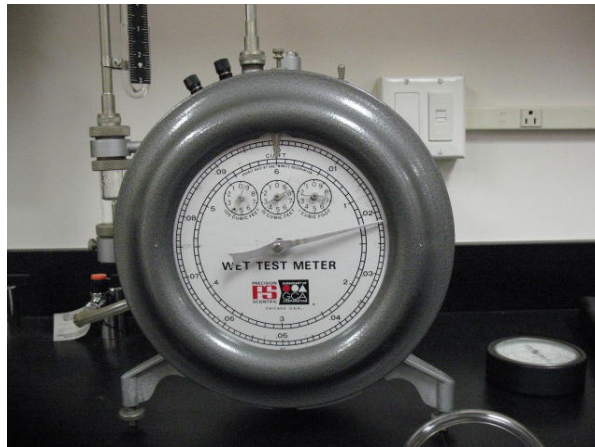
## Photo-Hygienic



This photo shows a meter with a telescoping probe capable of displaying real-time data and/or logging data including air velocity, temperature, and humidity. This type of meter is often used when assessing ventilation systems.



**Fungal Growth on subflooring surface and on reverse side of carpet padding**



**Is the Wet-test meter used for moisture sampling or detecting the volume of gas in a given space?**