FACT SHEET

Methylene Chloride

CAS #: 75-09-2

This fact sheet provides a summary of the Development Support Document (DSD) created by the TCEQ Toxicology Division (TD) for the development of Regulatory Guidelines (ESLs, AMCVs and ReVs) for ambient exposure to this chemical. For more detailed information, please see the DSD or contact the TD by phone (1-877-992-8370) or e-mail (tox@tceq.texas.gov).

What is methylene chloride?

Methylene chloride is a volatile, colorless liquid with a mild, sweet odor. Dichloromethane is another name for methylene chloride.

How is methylene chloride released into ambient air?

Because methylene chloride is a highly volatile substance and does not occur naturally in the environment, most environmental releases are into the ambient air during its production, storage, transport, and industrial and consumer uses. For example, virtually all the methylene chloride in paint strippers, aerosols, adhesives and glues, and cleaning fluids and degreasers is released into the ambient air during use of these products.

How can methylene chloride affect my health?

Permitted levels of methylene chloride should not cause adverse health and welfare effects. Exposure to sufficiently high concentrations of methylene chloride can depress the nervous system and affect vision (e.g., decreased visual-peripheral performance), which is the most sensitive effect for short-term inhalation exposure to this chemical. Laboratory animal data have shown that long-term (e.g., lifetime) exposure to high concentrations of methylene chloride can damage the liver, and may cause cancer in the liver and lung. Both USEPA and TCEQ consider methylene chloride as "likely to be carcinogenic to humans."

Is methylene chloride odorous or harmful to plants?

Methylene chloride has a mild, sweet, pleasant odor at high concentrations. No information was located regarding the potential adverse effects of methylene chloride on plants.

Why does the TCEQ set Regulatory Guidelines for methylene chloride?

The TCEQ has set various air quality guideline levels (ESLs, AMCVs and ReVs) to protect human health and welfare. Please see Definitions of ESLs, ReVs, and AMCVs located on the TCEQ DSD webpage for more information. The air quality guideline levels for methylene chloride have been designed to protect the general public from short-term and long-term adverse health and welfare effects. The general public includes sensitive populations such as children, the

elderly, pregnant women and people with preexisting health conditions. If you would like to know more about the specific ESLs, AMCVs and ReVs developed, what the values are and what they are used for, please see the DSD.