FACT*Sheet* Hexavalent Chromium

Why should I worry about Hexavalent Chromium?

Workplace exposure to Hexavalent Chromium or chromium VI is associated with lung cancer, irritation or permanent damage to the nose, throat and lungs, allergies, and eye and skin irritation. Your industry has been identified by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) as having exposures to elevated levels of Hexavalent Chromium.

What processes commonly use Hexavalent Chromium?

- Chrome electroplating
- Welding and hotworking stainless steel, high chrome alloys and chrome-coated metals
- Applying and removing chromate-containing paints, pigments and other surface coatings.
- Auto body repair

How do I know if I have Hexavalent Chromium in my workplace?

Check labels and material safety data sheets that come with the products you use in your workplace:
Hexavalent Chromium will often appear as a "CHROMATE" in many commonly used products such as: Pigments in paints, inks, and plastics (lead chromate, zinc chromate); anti-corrosion coatings (Chromic trioxide, calcium chromate, sodium chromate, zinc chromate); stainless steel (becomes Hexavalent when cast, welded or torch cut); textile dyes (ammonium dichromate); wood preservation (chromium trioxide); and leather tanning (ammonium dichromate).

If there is Hexavalent Chromium in the products I work with, what do I need to do and where can I get help?

At minimum, you need to comply with the Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) standard for Hexavalent Chromium (click on "12-157") and for General industry - click on "12-202C" and go to page 462. You may need to measure and monitor employee exposure levels and if levels exceed the acceptable levels, you will need to reduce levels through engineering controls (ventilation), work-practice controls (hygiene), and if necessary, personal protective equipment (PPE).

Request a FREE, confidential consultation – 808-586-9135 (HIOSH Consultation & Training)

Click on: HIOSH's Directive on the Chromium (VI) Standards Inspection Procedures.

Click on OSHA's Safety & Health Topics