



THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

DESIGNATED SUBSTANCES PROGRAM
BENZENE

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List of Contents / Attachments

	Page Number
Introduction	3
Responsibilities	3
Identification and Use	3
Exposure Potential / Control Measures	3
Assessment	4
Medical Surveillance	4
Training	4
Appendix 1 (Benzene Assessment Form)	5

INTRODUCTION:

Benzene is prescribed as a designated substance under the "*Regulation respecting Benzene - made under the Occupational Health and Safety Act*", [R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 839 as amended by O. Reg. 511/92; 387/00, 105/04]. Designated substance regulations apply to employers and workers at workplaces where two conditions are met:

- the substance is present in the workplace, and
- a worker is likely to inhale, ingest or absorb some of the substance that is present.

The designated substance regulations require that an assessment be conducted to determine the extent to which workers are exposed to the substance. The assessment is done to determine:

- whether workers are inhaling, ingesting or absorbing the substance at present or whether they are likely to do so in the future; and
- whether or not the health of a worker may be affected by exposure to the substance.

This assessment covers the following details:

- the methods and procedures used in the processing, use, handling or storage of the substance;
- the actual and the potential exposure of workers to the substance; and
- the measures and procedures necessary to control such exposure by means of engineering controls, work practices, and hygiene practices and facilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Every person working with benzene is responsible for following safe work practices. The Principal Investigator/supervisor is responsible for ensuring that an inventory of all designated substances is maintained, including recording of the amount used. The inventory is to be submitted to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). The Principal Investigator/supervisor is responsible for ensuring adequate training is provided to employees and that safety equipment is used, including personal protective equipment and engineering controls e.g. fumehoods.

IDENTIFICATION AND USE:

University of Western Ontario (UWO) Employees using benzene are to submit a Designated Substance Inventory form to OHS indicating the location and the amount used. The forms are stored in the "Designated Substance" binder and the information is also stored in the Lab Safety Database. Benzene is used in small quantities (less than 1L) in various locations at UWO.

EXPOSURE POTENTIAL / CONTROL MEASURES:

Exposure Potential

The amounts of benzene used at UWO are small and therefore the exposure potential is low should there be an accidental spill.

In order to ensure that the potential for exposure remains low:

- Only the minimum amount of a chemical should be purchased.
- All spills must be cleaned up immediately.
- Waste benzene must be properly collected and disposed of promptly

Call Campus Community Police Services (CCPS) @ 911 for the UWO Hazardous Material Response Team who, will respond to all hazardous materials emergencies, including designated substances. The team is equipped with the proper personal protective equipment and is always on call to deal with all situations involving hazardous materials emergencies

Control Measures

Employees handling benzene are required to follow the procedure for handling chemicals outlined in the Laboratory Health and Safety Manual and the Hazardous Materials Management Handbook.

ASSESSMENT

Each location listed will be assessed depending on the amount and form used. The information will be stored in the Lab Safety Database. If an assessment is required a Benzene Assessment Form (Appendix 1) is to be completed and stored in the "Designated Substance" binder. Should an assessment result in the need for a control program this will be implemented as required.

MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE

Each employee at UWO is to have a [Position Hazard Communication Form](#) filled out by their supervisor and submitted to Workplace Health. If medical surveillance is required, Workplace Health will arrange the necessary tests as required. Should the employee decide not to participate in a medical surveillance program, a waiver must be signed by the employee.

TRAINING

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring all personnel are trained in the handling of benzene. All training is to be documented and the records kept.

