SPRAY PAINTING SAFETY

Spray painting is a common and effective way to protect and beautify parts, products, vehicles, and buildings. Spray painting allows coverage of large areas with even coats of primer, paint, sealers, and other coatings. However, workers in spray painting operations need to recognize and guard against the hazard associated with spray painting processes.

Many paints, coatings, catalysts, sealers, hardeners, and solvents contain hazardous chemicals. Exposure to chemicals can occur during mixing of the coating, spraying the material, and grinding or sanding it. Even some surface preparation and cleanup solvents can pose a hazard, if not handled properly. As such, workers should avoid using solvents for cleaning paint from hands or skin. They should use water-based cleansers that are meant for personal cleanup.

Hazardous chemicals in coatings and solvents can enter the body several ways. Workers can inhale chemical vapors from spraying, absorb the chemical by skin contact or inject the chemical with high pressure spray painting equipment. Symptoms of overexposure to hazardous chemicals include nausea, rashes, and long term illnesses like asthma, lung cancer, and sensitization (becoming severely allergic to the paint). Before work begins, spray painters should read the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) of the chemical they'll be using then wear the appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety glasses, a respirator (if medically qualified, properly fit- tested, and trained), gloves or coveralls to protect themselves against its hazards.

As proper ventilation is important when working with paint coatings, a spray booth is an excellent way to remove spray paint vapors and debris from a worker's breathing zone. Many coatings contain flammable substances that are aerosolized when sprayed through powered equipment and without proper ventilation, such as in a spray booth, these vapors can build up and create an explosion and fire danger. But to provide maximum protection, the spray booth must be properly maintained, including regular cleaning of filters and overspray. And to prevent sparking a flammable substance, smoking and other sources of flame near spray painting operations should be prohibited and tools should be properly rated and grounded for work in a spray painting area.

Because much of the equipment used for spray painting and surface preparation uses compressed air, workers should be aware that noise can be a risk, so should wear hearing protection when working with air powered tools. Grinding and sanding equipment not only generates noise, they also create fine dust particles so, workers should be advised to use safety glasses and a dust mask or a respirator, if required and qualified to do so.

Consider ergonomics when spraying coatings. Often, workers must hold full paint pots and maneuver heavy, awkward objects while spraying. Balanced spray guns that fit comfortably in the hand or using hoists and dollies to move objects can reduce the chance of accidents and injuries. Also, workers should be encouraged to take frequent breaks and stretch often to avoid strains and sprains. If workers can think about safety in and around spray paint operations, they can avoid painting themselves into a hazardous corner.

TOOLBOX TALKS
SPRAY PAINTING SAFETY

Meeting Conducted By: _____ Date: _____

Comments: _____

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