
Getex warns against chromium hazards

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Getex has warned metal workers of the hazards of chromium compounds, which are used to make steel and for electroplating.

Chromium laden paint is usually found on ships and on industrial metal structures. Additionally, chromium and its compounds are used in steel making and electroplating.

Chromium targets the respiratory tract, and while it is a naturally occurring essential nutrient involved in glucose, protein and fat metabolism, exposure to excess amounts ranks in the top 10% in terms of danger to human health.

Zinc chromate dust is distinctively yellow. As a dry film, it is inert and presents no risks, until it is disturbed by sanding, grinding and welding activities. Zinc chromate dust can cause short term skin irritations, rashes, ulcers and irritation of the eyes, ears, nose and throat.

Chromate laden paints should be treated in the same way as leaded paints, and is covered by the Australian Standard AS 4361.2- 1998.

Where Chromium is found, workers should prepare a Hazardous Materials Register. This register should be updated whenever there is a change in the situation. A management plan should also be used to ensure people are not exposed to the hazard without proper precautions.

Getex can aid in preparing the register, by surveying painted surfaces, conducting scratch tests, spot testing and arranging for laboratory analysis of samples.

(Sourced from www.metalworker.com.au)

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