

Tailgate talk

Today's Subject:

Solvents

Date: _____

Solvents are used so frequently in many workplaces that it's easy to forget how hazardous they really are. Not only are solvents often flammable or combustible, but they can also be dangerous if they're ingested or if they contact bare skin.

What to focus on

Here are four things to keep in mind when working near solvents.

1. Wear the right clothing.

Make sure you're wearing protective clothing such as gloves, boots, eye and face protection, or barrier creams.

2. Identify solvents.

You should look at the labels on the solvents to determine what specific solvent you're working with so you can adhere to the safety guidelines for how to use the chemical. For additional information, look at the substance's safety data sheet.

3. Make sure you work in well-ventilated areas.

It's important to work with solvents in areas that have air flow and open windows or doors, in order to reduce your exposure to potentially harmful vapors.

4. Clean up spills

immediately. If a solvent leaks, you want to clean up the spill right away. If you're not qualified to take care of it, find someone who can clean it up, or let a supervisor know.