

## Managing the risks when handling polyurethane systems.



When using chemicals everyday there is a natural tendency for most people to become complacent about the associated risks involved. We are also aware that the pressures of running small businesses many frontline staff have insufficient training in the safe handling of MDI.

**Pacific Urethanes** would like to assist our partners in managing their risks when handling the polyurethane systems that we supply.

Methylene Diisocyanate (MDI) is one of the two chemicals which Pacific Urethanes supply in two-component polyurethane systems and are contained in all single component UrePac Bond systems.

One of the hazards stated on the MDI Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is sensitisation. Sensitisation occurs when an individual develops an allergic reaction to a chemical. With MDI this sensitisation may be caused via skin absorption or through breathing in vapours or aerosol borne MDI.



When an individual is sensitised, it can appear as a rash similar to hives or difficulty in breathing comparable to asthma type symptoms. A person can become sensitised to the isocyanate immediately, after many years of using the product, or in most cases not at all.

There are certain people who may have a higher chance of becoming sensitised. These people include people with skin conditions, such as eczema and people with respiratory illnesses including asthmatics.

To prevent sensitisation occurring, we recommend that safe chemical handling practices are followed:

- **Use Personal protection Equipment (PPE)**
  - Laboratory grade gloves i.e. latex
  - Safety Goggles
  - Body-covering clothing to protect exposed arms and legs
  - If spraying use a respirator and ensure that the organic vapour cartridge is changed monthly or preferably a full air fed hood.
- **Avoid heating MDI**
  - At ambient temperatures MDI usually does not pose a risk. However when heated above 70°C it can give off enough vapour to exceed the recommended short-term exposure limit (STEL). We strongly recommend respirator usage if the MDI is going to be heated above this temperature.
- **Wash hands**
  - Wash hands whenever you stop to eat, smoke or take a break.

If your skin does come in contact with MDI, we strongly recommend that the exposed skin is washed with soapy water for a period **No Less** than 20 minutes. This will limit exposure to the chemical.

We encourage you circulate this document and any relevant Safety Datasheets to your employees who handle any of **Pacific Urethanes** manufactured chemicals. Our technical team would also be happy to run training days in the safe handling of our chemicals with your team.

**For more information on this issue and any of our previous eNews please visit**

<http://pacificurethanes.com/methylene-diisocyanate-mdi-safety/>

**Pacific Urethanes are the Polyurethane Formulation Specialists.**

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