

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Dichloromethane (DCM) and the New EPA Rule

In April of 2024, the EPA published a new rule prohibiting most uses of dichloromethane, or DCM. Below are some frequently asked questions about DCM and the new EPA rule. The full EPA guide to complying with the new rule can be found [here](#).

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- Both acute and chronic hazards exist when exposed to DCM, including fatigue, headache, chest pain, irregular or stopped heart rhythm, lung irritation and pulmonary edema, liver and lung cancers, brain damage, and more.

How will the regulation affect my research?

- Research labs will still be able to use DCM if appropriate work practices are implemented and adhered to. These include additional training, PPE, and exposure monitoring (to be funded by the lab).
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What is included in the Exposure Control Plan (ECP)? Where can I get one?

- The ECP will include:
 - Monitoring schedule: Places where DCM is used must have initial monitoring performed. Monitoring may involve all employees or a single individual who represents the procedures being performed. Regulated areas as determined by the ECP may be required to perform periodic monitoring to ensure exposure levels are below EPA regulations. Monitoring will be paid for by the PI, Department or both.
 - Regulated areas: Areas where DCM is used need to be clearly marked and posted.
 - PPE selection and criteria: If DCM levels cannot be lowered to acceptable levels, supplied-air respirators must be purchased for affected employees. These employees must also abide by the USF Respiratory Protection Program. Protection against dermal exposures requires the use of PVA or Silver Shield gloves. Double nitrile gloves do not provide sufficient protection.
 - Record keeping for at least 30 years
- The ECP must be developed by PIs, Lab Managers/supervisors who are unable to eliminate DCM use in their labs, and it must be specific to their lab and research. USF's EH&S team will create and post an ~~AD~~

How could I be exposed to DCM? What are the routes of exposure?

- The routes of exposure are dermal contact and inhalation.
- Injection injuries are uncommon, yet extremely severe.

How does DCM affect my health?

- The EPA identified acute and chronic illnesses, including cancer, from inhalation and dermal exposures.
- It affects the central nervous system and the liver.
- Acute exposures can lead to dizziness, loss of consciousness, and death.

What work practice controls and PPE are required when working with DCM?

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