

OSHA's Compliance Deadline for Hexavalent Chromium Monitoring November 27, 2006

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Companies with 20 or more employees must be able to demonstrate compliance with the initial exposure determination requirements established in 29 CFR, 1910.1026. Many products and processes potentially expose workers to the dangerous form of chromium (Cr VI), including pigments containing dry chromate, spray paints and coatings containing chromate, chrome plating baths, and welding or cutting metals, such as stainless steel. Stick welding on stainless steel welding involves the greatest exposure to hexavalent chromium¹.

To comply with the monitoring requirements of OSHA established in 1910.1026(d)(2)(i), employers must determine the 8-hour time weighted average exposure for workers on the basis of a sufficient number of personal breathing zone air samples. Representative samples should be collected from employees expected to have the highest chromium exposure.

Using high flow pumps set at a flow rate of 2 to 4 liters per minute, personal air samples are collected during a 4 to 8 hour event (respectively) by drawing air through unweighed 37-mm PVC filters in polystyrene cassettes. All samples must be sent to an AIHA accredited laboratory within 24 hours of sampling for analysis of Chromium IV (total) using Method OSHA ID-215.



Results must be compared to OSHA's established action level of 2.5 micrograms per cubic meter of air ($2.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and permissible exposure level of 5 micrograms per cubic meter of air ($5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) to determine if workers are being exposed to harmful concentrations of hexavalent chromium. If so, the employer must establish a program to reduce or eliminate sources through the replacement of materials, installation of ventilation systems and/or implementation of shorter work exposures.

Employers must also provide personal protective equipment, medical surveillance and routine exposure monitoring for workers in high-risk areas. Monitoring must continue every 3-6 months until results prove that exposure concentrations have been reduced below OSHA's action level through consecutive readings collected within 7 days of each other.

For more information on OSHA's new standard, contact Compliance Centre at **800-257-8199**. We are licensed and insured with offices in Orangeburg, SC and Charlotte, NC. Our qualified staff of occupational health and safety professionals provides expert services as an unbiased party throughout a large geographical area. Let us evaluate your workplace to identify sources of hexavalent chromium, collect representative samples from workers, develop a monitoring program and train workers on safe work practices. Visit our website at www.compliancecentre.net for additional qualifications and services.

¹ US Department of Labor. <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hexavalentchromium/recognition.html> November 20, 2006.

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