

Everyone Goes Home “SAFE”!

Accidental Ingestion of Paint Thinner Caused by Improper Use of Drinking Container

We have a recurring problem with use of improper containers by both contractors and employees.

After entering the facility he went to his truck where he had left a PowerAde bottle the day before. He opened the bottle and took a sip of what he thought was water, **but instead got a mouthful of paint thinner (Xylene)**. He immediately spit out the liquid, but did ingest a small amount. He was taken to the medical office and evaluated by an onsite paramedic. He was then sent to his company doctor, and later released to return to work. This was a fortunate outcome from an incident that had the potential of being life threatening.



Chemical ingestion is very serious due to potential for liquid entering the lungs during coughing. In the lungs, chemical pneumonia occurs in minutes and can be fatal if immediate medical attention is not given at a hospital. Sadly these types of incidents most often happen at home with children.

According to statements taken from co-workers and contractor Supervision, a night shift contractor used the drinking container to transfer paint thinner, and did not label or remove the container from the vehicle. Talk about setting a trap for your co-worker. Applying the 3 questions of Everyone Goes Home Safe in this situation we can see **this is one worker who went home Lucky!**

- 1. Did I put myself or others at risk by the way I worked in the process, in the use of tools, or in the use of equipment?*
- 2. Did I see a co-worker at risk or a condition that poses a risk and remain silent when I could have intervened?*
- 3. Did I deviate from established procedures, permit, or JSA requirements while performing my duties?*

There have been incidents as well, such as a safety audit findings about improper use of containers, unlabeled oil samples found in water bottles, and using the wrong container for certain lab samples. Supervisors should be auditing their work areas for any unlabeled or improper containers, correct any issues they find, and issues practice he situation immediately We need to stop taking shortcuts which put ourselves and others at risk. It is not too much to ask that everyone use proper, labeled containers when transferring any chemical. The next time you or someone else may not be so lucky. Don't take the chance and roll the dice on safety.

Doing Things Right:

- Check and see what type of container is needed (glass jars, metal cans, etc.) before you transfer chemicals. Never use any type of food or water containers to store chemicals.
- Label the container before using it to avoid spills and make sure it is done properly.
- **OSHA rules** and **SHG 5.1**(Section 4.4.2) **REQUIRE** chemicals be stored in proper containers, and they **MUST ALWAYS** be labeled.

REMINDER

Wet and Cold WEATHER can be dangerous for the work site, so always remain aware of the condition of the surface that you choose to walk and/or work in. Always choose a safe route of travel, and speed in which you walk. That alone will give you the best chance to be in the group of **Everyone Goes Home "SAFE"!**

“The best safety tool anyone can have and use is the “BRAIN”