



A local source for welding support.

TECH. TALK

5835 Manchester Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63110
(314) 644-3500
ceekay.com

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OSHA MAY STOP BY TO CHECK YOUR HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM LEVELS. ARE YOU READY?

OSHA'S PLANS:

The US Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced on August 20, 2008, the start of a local emphasis program in Kansas and Eastern Missouri aimed at reducing workplace health hazards associated with exposure to Hexavalent Chromium Cr(VI) in general industry and construction. OSHA's goal is to reduce employee exposures to these hazards through increased awareness and enforcement activities.

Under the program, **OSHA will randomly select general industry establishments for inspection which will have a standard industrial classification code within selected industries.**

All inspections will be within the boundaries of OSHA's Wichita, KS and St. Louis, MO offices. Partial inspections will be conducted with a focus on

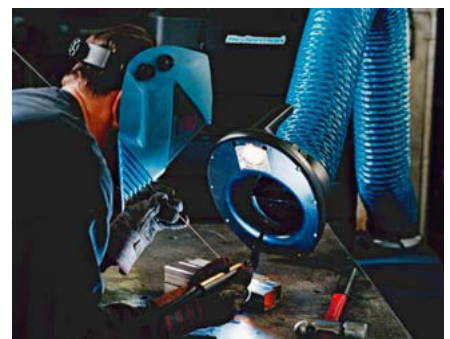
exposures to hexavalent chromium. The new standard lowers OSHA's permissible exposure limit (PEL) for hexavalent chromium and for all Cr(VI) compounds, to 5 micrograms of Cr(VI) per cubic meter of air as an 8 hour time weighted average.



What is Hexavalent Chromium?

Hexavalent chromium is prevalent in the metal fabricating industry. Cr(VI) compounds are used most commonly as a structural and anticorrosive

element in stainless steel, iron, steel production and in welding and painting. Occupational exposures to Cr(VI) can occur from inhaling its mist (such as from chrome plating), dusts or fumes, and from dermal contact. Exposure to Cr(VI) has been linked conclusively to lung cancer, asthma, nasal ulcerations and perforations, skin ulcerations and allergic and irritant contact dermatitis.



How is Hexavalent Chromium produced?

Welding, Cutting, and/or grinding on chromium bearing metals produced Cr(VI).

OSHA'S HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM (CONTINUED)

Greater levels of exposure can exist when cutting or welding operations take place.

Stainless steel welding processes yield welding exposures including elements of:

- Chromium
- Nickel
- Cadmium
- Manganese
- Hexavalent Chromium



Which industries need to comply with the standard?

- Construction
- General Industry
- Shipyards

Welding Robots have to be protected too!

It must also be remembered that welding operations using automated welding equipment require careful monitoring. Operators and service personnel over

seeing robotic welding equipment can be subject to residual fumes and need to be protected similarly to manual work stations.



How can Cee Kay help our customers meet these guidelines?

Cee Kay Supply, Inc has developed partnerships with our vendors to assist our customers with Hexavalent Chromium needs.

What actions should your organization take?

There are a number of actions that can be taken to reduce exposure to Manganese and Cr(VI) in welding or similar hazardous work environments. Some of the critical considerations include:

- The method and capacity of ventilation and fume extraction systems.
- The work habits of training the welder and the materials being welded.

For more information, on Hexavalent Chromium requirements, log on to www.osha.gov or, contact Cee Kay's Technical Service Center at (314) 644-3500, Ext. 1197.

Information in this article was obtained from OSHA, Lincoln Electric and Nederman.