

# XYLENE FACT SHEET

North Carolina Division of Public Health • Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch

## Chemical Information

- One of the top 30 chemicals produced in the U.S.
- Clear, colorless, sweet-smelling liquid.
- Volatile and moderate fire risk.
- Produces flammable and toxic concentrations at room temperature.
- Occurs naturally in coal tar and petroleum.
- Used as a solvent and in the printing, rubber and leather industries, also used as a cleaning agent and a paint thinner.
- Found in small amounts in airplane fuel and gasoline.

## Hazards Identification

### **Acute Exposure:**

- Irritating to eyes, skin, and mucous membranes.
- Can result in corneal injury if splashed in the eyes.
- May cause headaches, dizziness, and confusion, changes in one's sense of balance, breathing difficulty, delayed reaction time, memory difficulties, and stomach discomfort.
- Ingestion may cause rapid heartbeat, reversible liver and renal damage.

### **Chronic Exposure:**

- Prolonged skin contact can remove moisture from the skin, causing it to crack and peel.
- May cause reversible eye damage, breathing difficulty, confusion, dizziness, changes in liver function, and renal impairment.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acute Exposure Guideline Level 1 (AEGL - 1) for xylene is 130 ppm for an 8-hour period.

## Stability & Reactivity

- Incompatible with strong oxidizers.

## Handling & Storage

- Should be stored in cool, well-ventilated location, away from areas of acute fire hazard, open flames & strongly oxidizing materials.
- All containers should be clearly labelled & kept tightly closed.
- Protect containers against physical damage. Outdoor or detached storage is preferable. Indoor storage should be in a standard flammable liquid storage room.

## **Glossary**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs) as threshold exposure limits for the general public that are applicable to emergency exposure periods ranging from 10 minutes to 8 hours. The three AEGLs are defined as follows:

AEGL-1 – airborne concentration of a substance at which the general population could experience notable discomfort, irritation or certain asymptomatic non-sensory effects.

AEGL-2 – airborne concentration of a substance at which the general population could experience irreversible or other serious, long-lasting adverse health effects or an impaired ability to escape.

AEGL-3 – airborne concentration of a substance at which the general population could experience life threatening health effects or death.

