



# Are You Aware! The Dangers of Spray Painting mist?

**ALMOST ALL MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR BODY SHOPS USE PAINTS AND LACQUERS CONTAINING ISOCYANATE HARDENER.**

Breathing in isocyanate paint mist can cause asthma which can be both permanent and severe. There is no cure. Breathing in the smallest amount of isocyanate could trigger an attack.

It is also important to remember that “water-based” paints may contain isocyanates.

## **Early symptoms include:**

- recurring blocked or runny nose
- recurring sore or watering eyes
- chest tightness, often occurring outside working hours
- persistent cough
- flu-like shivers
- wheezing
- breathlessness.

Vehicle spray painters are about 80 times more likely to get asthma than the average worker.

The main source of isocyanate exposure is spray painting. It may also occur from cleaning the spray gun and from paint curing. But you can prevent exposure by using:

- properly designed spray booths and rooms;
- correct working procedures;
- appropriate personal protective equipment; and by performing
- regular checks to confirm that the controls are working properly.

## **Spray booths and rooms**

A paint spray gun creates a visible fan of paint and large quantities of paint mist. Even in a properly designed spray booth the mist quickly spreads through the whole spray enclosure, enveloping the operator. Special lighting can show up this mist.

The paint mist is not, as is often imagined, instantly removed by the ventilation. Work out the proper

‘clearance time’ and put a sign on the booth. Typically, a booth clears in less than 5 minutes, whereas a room can take 20 minutes.

## **Working procedures**

- Never spray isocyanate – containing paint in an occupied workshop
- Always use Air-fed Breathing Apparatus (BA). Even small exposure will create a risk
- Always use chemical resistant gloves when handling e.g. Nitrite
- Never lift your visor soon after spraying to check the work quality. You will be surrounded by invisible paint mist. This practice can cause significant exposure. So don’t do it!
- When you want to leave the booth or room during the clearance time you should walk to the pedestrian door wearing the air-fed BA. The air hose must be long enough, and the connection point by the door; open the door, unplug the airline and hang it next to the door; step out, shut the door and remove the air-fed BA. This is the only way to do it safely!
- When gun-cleaning spray-to-dry in the booth or room, the wearing of Air-fed BA provides extraction for gun cleaning machines that create a mist.

## **Health surveillance**

Isocyanates are substances under H&S law that require health surveillance.

Vehicle Division members: if you have any questions about Health and Safety you should contact Sarah Ross on 0425 784 817

Being a Vehicle Division member is good for your health and safety!

Information from HSE (Health and safety Executive UK) Safety in Isocyanate paint spray