

ASE

# Naval Facilities Engineering Command



# Abstract of an Accident

93-1

**ACCIDENT TYPE:** Chemical Exposure  
**INJURY:** Dizziness, Nausea, Impaired Judgement and Muscle Tightness  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Electrical Junction Box Installation  
**SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** Safety Shoes and Glasses  
**CHEMICAL USED:** NSN - 8010-00-160-5787

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT:

An electrical worker had been assigned to install a junction box. He completed the installation and was using a caulking compound to weather-proof the equipment. He put the caulk around the sides and then spread it and evened it out using his unprotected hands. After applying the caulk it began to harden on his hands. He went to his vehicle to get his hand cleaner. He normally stores an approved hand cleaner in his vehicle, but on this date he was driving a loan vehicle while his was being repaired. He could not find a hand cleaner, but did find some thinner which he thought would be alright to use. He did not fully read the warning label and no Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) was available. He cleaned his hands with the full strength thinner and within 10 minutes he started to experience nausea, light-headedness, thigh and biceps tightness, and impaired judgement. He immediately went for medical assistance and was treated for several hours for chemical overexposure from absorption and inhalation of the thinner chemicals. There were no lasting effects from this overexposure, but there very well could have been.

## DIRECT CAUSE:

- Not using hand protection or mechanical device when applying caulk
- Improper storage, handling and use of chemicals
- Inadequate hazard communication. Employee failed to read chemical warning label of an unfamiliar product. No MSDS available. No employee training on the safe use of the product.

## LESSONS LEARNED:

- Supervisors and employees must inspect their vehicles to ensure only authorized chemicals are available for use and that the employees have been properly trained on the safe use and handling of the item
- Personnel must never use unfamiliar chemicals/products without first finding out protective measures to be followed

**Your SAFETY contact is...**