

# Work Safe Bulletin

## Isocyanates

The Cement Finishing Labour Relations Association represents the labour relations and safety interests of the cement finishing industry across Ontario.

The purpose of this document is to provide specific hazard information and promote discussion of safe work practices.

This bulletin does not contain a full analysis of the law, nor does it constitute a legal opinion. The CFLRA is not liable for any damages resulting from the use of this information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 289-837-1627 or by e-mail at [safety@cflra.ca](mailto:safety@cflra.ca)

### Background:

Isocyanates are a common component of polyurethane and epoxy materials.

Isocyanates are reactive irritants which can be absorbed through the eyes, skin and lungs. Sensitization to isocyanates can result in possible skin irritation and allergic respiratory reactions.

Exposure to Isocyanates can be prevented through the use of proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

### Recommendations:

Each project has unique characteristics that require careful consideration. It is strongly recommended that this issue be discussed at the preconstruction meeting with your safety representative. To reduce the possibility of an illness, it is recommended that the following be considered:

1. Workers must understand the WHMIS (See also Global Harmonized System) and read the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each material to determine the safe handling procedures and necessary personal protective equipment to be employed for its safe use.
2. Direct exposure to materials containing isocyanates should be avoided through the use of impervious protective clothing, gloves, and a supplied air full-face respirator where required.
3. Ensure adequate ventilation to eliminate the accumulation of vapours.
4. Store materials in tightly sealed containers when not in use.
5. Ensure that measures are taken to protect other workers or building occupants adjacent to the work area. For example cordon off the work area to prevent entry by unprotected workers.
6. Use good hygiene practices—wash hands and face prior to eating, drinking or smoking.
7. Clean up spills quickly wearing the appropriate PPE.

### Further references:

- [Ontario Regulation 490 - Designated Substances](#)
- [CSA Z94.4-15 Selection, Use and Care of Respirators](#)
- [Occupation Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Ontario Regulation for Construction Projects](#)
- [Infrastructure Health & Safety Association](#)



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