

PHOSGENE OXIME FACT SHEET

What is phosgene oxime?

Phosgene oxime is a manufactured chemical warfare agent. It is colorless in solid form and yellowish-brown when it is a liquid. It is also known as an acidic agent because of the type of damage it causes on the skin and tissue. Phosgene oxime has an irritating odor.

It does not last for a long time in the environment. It breaks down in soil within 2 hours when the temperature is normal, and it breaks down in water within a few days.

How you can be exposed to phosgene oxime?

You can be exposed to phosgene oxime by touching, drinking water or eating food that's been contaminated from the liquid released into a substance. If released as a gas into the air, you can be exposed by inhaling and through skin or eye contact. The extent of the phosgene oxime poisoning will depend on how you were exposed, the amount, and the length of time.

What are the immediate symptoms?

Phosgene oxime can have the following effects on specific parts of the body:

- The skin will become painful within seconds, the area whitened and surrounded by red rings within 30 seconds of exposure. Hives develop within 15 minutes. After 24 hours, the whitened areas of skin turn brown and die. Itching and pain may continue throughout the healing process.
- The eyes may become severely painful, blurred, irritated, and temporary blind.
- If inhaled, you may have symptoms of coughing, hoarseness, a runny nose, sinus pain, and shortness of breath.

What are the long-term health effects?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, no information is available on the long-term health effects of phosgene oxime in humans.

What you should do if you think you have been exposed to phosgene oxime?

If you think you have been exposed, move quickly to an area where fresh air is available. Remove your clothing by cutting them off the body; if possible do not pull the clothes over the head. Quickly wash your entire body with large amounts of soap and water. If your eyes are burning or your vision is blurred, rinse them with plain water for 10 to 15 minutes. If you wear contacts, wash your hands after removing contaminated clothes and then remove the contacts before rinsing your eyes.

If you wear glasses, remove and wash them with soap and water. You can put your glasses back on after you wash them. Place your contaminated clothes and contacts into a plastic bag and seal. Place the bag into a second plastic bag and seal. **Call 911 for medical attention right away and removal of the contaminated items. Do not drive yourself to the hospital as you may become very ill on your way.**

Where can you get more information on phosgene oxime?

Regional Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222)

www.bt.cdc.gov/

www.dshs.state.tx.us

www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/rtkweb/rtkhsfs.htm

Source of information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)