

Construction Hazards: Solvents

	Source	Special Hazards
Benzene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varnishes • Finishes • Woodsealers • Thinners • Paints • Adhesives • Cleaning and degreasing solutions and other products 	Causes leukemia.
Methylene Chloride		May cause cancer.
Toluene		Liver and kidney damage at high levels.
Trichloroethylene		Liver damage. May cause cancer.

Health Effects: Most solvents you work with, such as acetone, TCE or other degreasers affect your health in similar ways:

Short Term: Most organic solvents affect the brain the same way drinking alcohol does. Overexposure causes symptoms resembling drunkenness, including headache, “feeling high,” nausea, dizziness, and at high levels, loss of coordination. Other short term health effects are eye, nose and throat irritation, and skin rash.

Long Term: Repeated, frequent overexposure over months or years may cause long-lasting damage to the central nervous system (the brain and nerves).

Controls for Metal Fumes:

Avoid welding on toxic metals or coatings; brush or scrub off coatings. Natural or general ventilation is often adequate in open areas. Position yourself so that fumes don’t blow into your face. Provide local exhaust ventilation in small or confined spaces. Respirators should be worn when ventilation or other controls are not possible.
Lead: Shower or change clothes to avoid bringing lead home to your family.