



Trichloroethylene Fact Sheet

March 2016

➔ **What is trichloroethylene (TCE) and where is it found?**

TCE is a chemical that is commonly used as a solvent. TCE has a pleasant, sweet smell, though you can breathe it in without smelling it. TCE vapors can also be absorbed through your skin. The vast majority of TCE use is in commercial or manufacturing facilities and sold through industrial supply chains as refrigerant chemicals and degreasers. While not widely marketed to consumers, there are products containing TCE that consumers can purchase.

➔ **Why should I be concerned about exposure to TCE?**

TCE has the potential to affect the developing fetus, irritate the respiratory system and skin, and cause light-headedness, drowsiness, and headaches. Repeated exposure to TCE has been associated with effects in the liver, kidneys, immune system, and central nervous system. Additionally, TCE has the potential to cause cancer in humans. EPA has concerns for all these effects.

➔ **How do I know if TCE is an ingredient in a product?**

In general, labels identify product ingredients so look at them carefully, or consult the material safety data sheet or the safety data sheet available from manufacturers. TCE can be referred to as trichlor, trike, tri, and sold under a variety of trade names. It is identified by its Chemical Abstract Service number, which is 79-01-6.

➔ **What steps can I take to reduce my exposure to TCE?**

There are alternative degreasing products or methods that do not use TCE. Workers using TCE should follow federal or state recommendations and requirements to minimize exposure. Alternatives include aqueous cleaners, mechanical cleaning techniques, safer chemicals, as well as using solvents in closed loop systems.

➔ **What action is EPA taking to address risks from TCE?**

EPA is initiating rulemakings under Section 6(a) of TSCA to eliminate the risk of TCE in aerosol degreasers and as a spotting agent at dry cleaning facilities, as well as from use of TCE in vapor degreasing operations. These rulemakings will propose new requirements to protect consumers and workers from the risks of TCE.

In 2015, EPA reached an agreement with PLZ Aeroscience Corporation to voluntarily phase-out the use of TCE in an arts and crafts spray fixative product marketed to consumers. To ensure that these phased out chemicals are not reintroduced into commerce, EPA has taken action that will provide the agency with the opportunity to review and, if necessary, block the new use or import if it is determined that it could pose a risk.

For more information on EPA's actions to address risks from TCE, please visit EPA's TCE webpage at <http://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/fact-sheet-trichloroethylene-tce>.