



Peracetic Acid in the Regulatory Spot Light

Peracetic Acid (PAA) has seen an onslaught of attention these last 18 months as it continues to sweep into new markets and used for new applications. Because PAA is an excellent anti-microbial and leaves no harmful residues, it is the chemical of choice in healthcare, vegetable & fruit processing, beef & poultry processing, aseptic packaging & filling and water treatment. However, the high reactivity of PAA that underlies its benefits also means that excessive exposure to the vapor can be harmful and cause health issues to those that are exposed. The debate of course lies around what constitutes excessive exposure?

Several organizations are addressing the need to limit exposure to PAA. In 2014, the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) came out with a short-term exposure limit (STEL) of 0.4 parts per million (ppm) calculated as a 15-minute time weighted average (TWA). NIOSH is conducting its own research and plans to establish not only a new Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) but also a Recommended Exposure Limit (REL).

California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health, better known as Cal/OSHA is also in the process of setting a Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) and its Health Effects Advisory Committee recently recommended an 8-hour PEL of 0.2 ppm and a STEL of 0.4 ppm.

So, what does all this mean? It means that with the rise of PAA's use across a variety of industries, current exposure limits are changing, and new limits and regulations will soon be issued and enforced. It means that employers need to get out in front of these changes and start to establish safe practices for their employees. It means that employees should expect their work environment to be safe, and free of harmful chemicals.

Safety and adherence to this changing regulatory environment starts with understanding these exposure limits and how they affect your work place. Understanding the workplace environment starts with understanding what's in the air and is it safe.

For more information on Peracetic Acid visit:

<http://www.chemdaq.com/chemicals/peracetic-acid-monitoring/>