

1,000 Workers Evacuated due to Chemical Leak

KUALA LUMPUR: About 1,000 workers of a chemical company at the Malaysian Technology Park in Bukit Jalil were ordered to evacuate the building after chemicals used for insect control were found to have leaked.

Bukit Jalil Fire and Rescue Department chief Jalil Shaari Abdullah said 26 firemen from Bukit Jalil, Hang Tuah Fire and Rescue Department and a Hazardous Materials Expert team from the Jelatek Fire and Rescue Department arrived at the scene at 9.58am yesterday.



Hazardous: Firemen removing the faulty tools from a firm at the Malaysian Technology Park in Bukit Jalil yesterday. — Bernama

He added that **Bromomethane and Chloropicrin** chemicals were found on the **ground and first floor of the eight-storey building**.

“The chemicals are toxic and could damage the respiratory tract if there is long exposure,” he said after the cleaning process was carried out.

He said that except for those working on the ground and first floor where cleaning work was still in progress, the rest of the workers were allowed to return at 1pm. – Bernama

Methyl Bromide (Bromomethane)

- Methyl bromide is used as a **fumigant and pesticide**. Exposure may occur during fumigation activities.
- Methyl bromide occurs as a colorless and highly volatile gas that is slightly soluble in water.
- Methyl bromide is practically odorless but has a sweetish chloroform-like odor at high concentrations.

Symptoms of Health Effects:

- Breathing high concentrations of methyl bromide may cause pulmonary edema, impairing **respiratory function**.
- Symptoms of acute exposure leads to **neurological effects** in humans include headaches, dizziness, fainting, apathy, weakness, confusion, speech impairment, visual effects, numbness, twitching, and tremors; in severe cases paralysis and convulsions are possible.
- Methyl bromide is irritating to the eyes, skin, and mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract. Dermal exposure to methyl bromide can cause itching, redness, and blisters in humans.
- **Kidney damage** has been observed in humans who have inhaled high levels of methyl bromide.
- Inhalation of methyl bromide may cause the **liver to become swollen and tender**, but no significant injury to the liver has been observed in humans.

E-QOSH INFO

Chloropicrin

- Chloropicrin is a colorless to faint-yellow, oily liquid with an intensely irritating odor.
- A broad-spectrum **fumigant chemical** that can be used as an antimicrobial, fungicide, herbicide, insecticide, and nematicide.
- Used as a pre-plant soil fumigant at agricultural sites, tree replant sites, and greenhouses; a warning agent with other soil fumigants including methyl bromide and iodomethane, a warning agent in residential structures before sulfuryl fluoride fumigations; and an antimicrobial for remedial wood treatment.
- Approximately 10 million pounds of chloropicrin are used annually for pre-plant soil fumigations.
- Formerly used as a **war gas**, the **gastrointestinal effects** associated with exposure caused it to be called “vomiting gas”.

Symptoms of Health Effects:

- Chloropicrin can cause **eye, nose, throat, and upper respiratory irritation**. Results from a chloropicrin human sensory irritation study indicate that eye irritation is the most sensitive effect.
- **Repeated exposure** increased susceptibility to the acute effects and **damage to the lungs**.

Sources:

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/8/2/nation/9218811&sec=nation>
<http://www.epa.gov/ttnatw01/hlthef/methylbr.html>
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/npgd0132.html>
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/81-123/pdfs/0132-rev.pdf>

Prepared by,
Amy Cheam Boon Shi
QA/QOSHC Engineer

Checked & Verified by,
Mohd Azam Mujaini
QA Executive II