

SAFETY ALERT

A recent incident at a CONUS Army installation has increased the awareness of potential hazards when handling containers that either contain or have previously contained calcium hypochlorite.

Two employees at this installation were steam washing a tri-con container and afterwards experienced symptoms associated with exposure to chlorine gas. An investigation revealed that these containers had previously contained calcium hypochlorite, that is part of a kit used with a Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU).

Corrective actions for this potential problem are relatively simple. Personnel working with containers that contain or have contained calcium hypochlorite must obtain and comply with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the particular calcium hypochlorite that is either in the container or was previously in the container. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is indicated on the MSDS must be worn even if the container has been downloaded due to the potential for chlorine exposure due to off gassing, and possible degradation of calcium hypochlorite containers that were previously in the tri-con container.

Potential exposures will be minimized if containers are opened and aired out before steam cleaning procedures commence. Personnel shall be informed of hazardous materials previously stored in tri-con containers before they begin refurbishing them.

PPE for this particular procedure includes chemical safety goggles and natural or synthetic rubber gloves. Boots, aprons, or chemical suits should be used when necessary to prevent skin contact. If dusty conditions are encountered, use NIOSH approved respirator with acid gas cartridge and dust prefilter.

This Safety Alert Notification and matched SOP were developed by Sierra Army Depot. The SOP is available at <http://safety.army.mil/messages/container.doc>

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