

MOEL confirms chemical hazards in 71 new chemicals manufactured or imported in second half of last year

Feb. 27, 2019

On February 27th the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) published the names, health risks, and ways to prevent such risks of new chemicals manufactured or imported in the second half of last year. The information is published in Korean on the government's electronic gazette (gwanbo.moel.go.kr) and on MOEL website (www.moel.go.kr).

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, a person who intends to manufacture or import a new chemical should submit a hazard investigation report to the Minister of Employment and Labor in advance, and the Ministry, after examining such reports, publishes the names and health risks of new chemicals.

Of the 220 new chemicals published this time, the Ministry confirmed health risks in 71 chemicals, including 3-methyl salicylic acid, 1 and 4-benzenedimethanamine and 3-chlorodibenzothiophene. The health risks confirmed include acute toxicity, reproductive toxicity, skin corrosion or irritation, serious eye damage or eye irritation, germ cell mutagenicity, etc.

MOEL notified employers manufacturing or handling any of those hazardous chemicals to take measures to prevent health risks, including installing a proper ventilation facility such as a local exhaust ventilation system, and instructing workers to wear personal protective equipment such as safety goggles and gloves.

The Ministry also required those employers to prepare Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for such chemicals and display them in the workplace for workers to see. The MSDS is a document that provides detailed information on chemicals, including their names, health risks, related emergency measures and handling precautions.

Mr. Park Young-man, the Director-General of the Industrial Accident Prevention and Compensation Bureau, MOEL, said, "Through the publication of hazardous chemicals, we can inform the general public as well as workers of health risks associated with new chemicals." He also said, "Employers must take measures to prevent health risks so that workers can safely deal with new chemicals."