

7.1: Exposure Standards and Guidelines

Exposure Standards and Guidelines

Exposure standards and guidelines are developed by governments to protect the public from harmful substances and activities that can cause serious health problems. This section describes standards and guidelines relating to protection from the toxic effects of chemicals only.

Exposure standards and guidelines are determined by risk management decisions. Risk assessments provide regulatory agencies with estimates of numbers of persons potentially harmed under specific exposure conditions. Regulatory agencies then propose exposure standards and guidelines designed to protect the public from "unacceptable risk" levels.

Exposure standards and guidelines usually provide numerical exposure levels for various media (such as food, consumer products, water, and air) that should not be exceeded. Alternatively, these standards may be preventive measures to reduce exposure (such as labeling, special ventilation, protective clothing and equipment, and medical monitoring).



Figure 7.1.1 Standards and guidelines protect the public from harmful substances

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Standards and Guidelines

More specifically, standards and guidelines for chemical exposure levels consist of the following:

- **Standards** — legally acceptable exposure levels or controls issued as the result of Congressional or Executive mandate. They result from formal rulemaking and are legally enforceable. Violators are subject to punishment, including fines and imprisonment.
- **Guidelines** — recommended maximum exposure levels which are voluntary and not legally enforceable. Guidelines may be developed by regulatory and non-regulatory agencies, or by some professional societies.

Federal and state regulatory agencies have the authority to issue permissible exposure standards and guidelines in the following categories:

- Consumer Product Exposure Standards and Guidelines
- Environmental Exposure Standards and Guidelines
- Occupational Exposure Standards and Guidelines

Knowledge Check

1) Exposure standards are:

Developed by chemical manufacturers

Recommended maximum exposure levels which are voluntary and not legally enforceable

Legally enforceable acceptable exposure levels or controls

Answer

Legally enforceable acceptable exposure levels or controls - **This is the correct answer.**

Exposure standards are legally enforceable acceptable exposure levels or controls resulting from Congressional or Executive mandate.

2) Exposure guidelines are:

Developed by chemical manufacturers

Recommended maximum exposure levels which are voluntary and not legally enforceable

Legally enforceable acceptable exposure levels or controls

Answer

Recommended maximum exposure levels which are voluntary and not legally enforceable - **This is the correct answer.**

Exposure guidelines are recommended maximum exposure levels that are voluntary and not legally enforceable.

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