

Date sent: Fri, 27 Jun 1997 13:26:52 -0500 (CDT)  
From: "G.P. Jones" <jonesgp@ameslab.gov>  
Subject: **SAFETY ALERT- dimethylmercury**

This SAFETY ALERT is to provide you with information related to a fatality at Dartmouth College involving a single contact exposure to dimethylmercury. The researcher reported having one or more drops of the chemical contact her latex gloves. Within months, nausea and vomiting had developed, with the researcher's health deteriorating to coma and death. The latex gloves were independently evaluated for permeability, and were found to have penetration in 15 seconds or less.

The recommendations from Dartmouth College are as follows;

"A highly resistant laminate glove (Silvershield or 4H) should be worn under a pair of long-cuffed, unsupported neoprene, nitrile, or similar heavy-duty gloves. Latex or PVC gloves have an important role in many laboratory activities, but they are not suitable for significant, direct contact with aggressive or highly toxic chemicals. ... In all cases, the potential hazards associated with dimethylmercury and related allyl mercury compounds must not be underestimated."

One user of dimethylmercury had been identified within the Ames Laboratory, and the compound has been safely secured, pending disposal. **IF YOU KNOW OF OTHER USERS OR OF OTHER INVENTORY OF THIS COMPOUND, PLEASE CONTACT ESH&A AT 4-2153 IMMEDIATELY.**