

motd

by Rob Kolstad

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Outrage

Do you keep up with various controversies? I'm not talking about the Iraq War, which seems to be the number one controversy right now. I'm not even talking about voting machine issue in California. I'm talking about a little known controversy surrounding a chemical that is found through the world and is extremely dangerous.

What does this have to do with ;login: and computers? The main data clearinghouse is located on the Web at <http://www.dhmo.org>.

For whatever reason, little information has made it into the print media or other news services. In fact, this site is almost the only information source that presents the DHMO data in this way. I think it's important that this site be understood - and outrage about it put into context.

Basically, the Web site provides pages and pages of discussions, facts, and recommendations about the chemical known as DHMO, dihydrogen monoxide. The site includes:

- Environmental impact statements - "DHMO contributes to global warming and the "Greenhouse Effect"; it is one of the so-called 'Greenhouse gases'. It is a causative agent in most instances of soil erosion. . . . Measurable levels of DHMO have been verified in ice samples taken from both the Arctic and Antarctic ice caps. Recent massive DHMO exposures have led to loss of life and property in California, the US-Midwest, and the

Philippines, just to name a few.

- Relationships to cancer - "The causative link . . . has not been established, although a significant amount of evidence seems to suggest that DHMO at least plays a role in the formation of cancer, including: Hodgkin's lymphoma, . . . chondrosarcoma, fibrosarcoma, colorectal cancer, leukemia . . ." [another half dozen are listed.] Links to cancer agencies are included.
- DHMO and the dairy industry - DHMO is used throughout the US and international dairy industries. DHMO is found in every nation's milk supply. No regulations exist for using DHMO in dairy cattle, though it is widely used to increase milk production.
- The link between DHMO and child safety - inhaling it even in small quantities causes far too many deaths (actual statistic for just one age group: 3.1 deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-4 in the year 2000 died this way in the USA).

Other Dangers

Solid DHMO causes tissue damage in prolonged exposure; DHMO is a major component of acid rain. Gaseous DHMO causes severe burns; liquid DHMO "leads to corrosion and oxidation of many metals." "DHMO is often associated with killer cyclones in the U.S. Midwest and elsewhere."

DHMO, is used "as an industrial solvent and coolant, in nuclear power plants . . . by elite athletes to improve performance, in the

production of styrofoam . . . in abortion clinics, in cult rituals . . . by many terrorist organizations, in animal research laboratories, and in pesticide production and distribution."

The Web site goes into great detail about DHMO's chemical properties, why it should be banned, and the fact that DHMO is found in almost every river, lake, ocean, and stream - world-wide.

Other Assessments

One of my old graduate school friends told his daughter's chemistry teacher about the DHMO Web site. She assigned the class a quick research project to learn about the dangers of DHMO, assess its current impact on society, and write a short report/action plan. 100% of them came back with alarmist summaries and action plans that tended toward banning the substance altogether. I think this speaks worlds about the site and about how chemistry students view today's academic challenges.

A Challenge For You

Outrage is easy; action is more challenging. Please go to the Web site yourself and check it out. Get the facts you need. If you get out of it what I did, please seek out others to spread the word about its data - and about outrage. I fear that our society is way too manipulated by various sources of information and data. It's sites like this that expose our manipulation by the media and potentially enable us to get a better viewpoint on how to deal with information we are presented. We must conserve our outrage

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