



SIRC

Styrene
Information
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Center

NEWS & INFORMATION

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STATEMENT on NOISH study

[The following statement may be attributed in whole or in part to Jack Snyder, executive director of the Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC), unless otherwise noted.]

Washington, D.C., June 2, 2017 – Recently, a study commissioned by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health on styrene’s relation to respiratory diseases was published in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine. The study examined existing studies of styrene-exposed workers and the risk of developing non-malignant respiratory disease (NMRD), especially asthma and obliterative bronchiolitis (OB). Respiratory diseases in the NMRD category include bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, with OB being rare. There are many causes of NMRD, including occupational exposures, infectious diseases, and, most importantly, cigarette smoking. The authors attempted to do a causal assessment to determine if styrene is an exposure associated with asthma and OB.

SIRC engaged epidemiologist Dr. Jim Collins to review the NIOSH study and offer his analysis. He concludes, “[W]hile the authors have proposed a hypothesis of high styrene exposures being associated with asthma and OB based on several case reports, they failed to demonstrate associations with these diseases in the cross-sectional and cohort studies of styrene exposed workers.”

The NIOSH study adds to the breadth of knowledge related to potential health effects of styrene in the workplace, however it does not account entirely for the numerous external factors possibly contributing to the development of asthma and OB.

SIRC and the styrene industry remain confident in the safety of styrene for workers when the appropriate and mandated safeguards are in place to protect against unnecessary excessive exposure.

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About SIRC

The Styrene Information & Research Center (SIRC) serves as a liaison between industry, federal and state governments, and international agencies on health-related issues involving styrene. Find out more by visiting www.styrene.org.