Metal Plating Safety Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. A significant health effect in the plating workplace is nickel dermatitis. This is a phenomenon associated with soluble nickel compounds or nickel metal dissolved in sweat that penetrates skin causing an allergic reaction in genetically predisposed individuals. As a workplace exposure, this is probably a greater risk than is lung cancer by inhalation of aerosols of nickel sulfate, chloride or sulfamate.
2. Metal plating workers are exposed to a multitude of hazardous chemicals, which may cause poisoning, chemical burns, damage to the respiratory system, allergies, etc. They may be injured by falls on wet floors, may suffer cuts and pricks from sharp tools or jigs, and burns from hot liquids. Other common hazards include electric shock, fire and explosions, injuries caused by falling bodies, eye damage by flying particles, entanglement in moving machinery, high noise levels, etc.
3. Workers are exposed by inhaling airborne particles, which can remain in the lungs for many years. The dusty conditions that existed in early nickel production operations have been eliminated.
4. Most regulated limits of nickel exposure today are one tenth of those exposures or less. While some operations occasionally exceed the limits, most are in compliance. There is little evidence today of elevated incidence of lung or nasal cancers among nickel producers or users relative to local populations.

STATS

- Four workers at an Auburn metal plating company died Tuesday and 20 other people were injured when two chemicals were accidentally mixed, producing deadly hydrogen cyanide gas, officials said.