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## **Paraformaldehyde Decontamination Protocol for small equipment in the HSC**

The supervisor is responsible to ensure that all of the steps below are followed. Contact the Safety office if there are any questions or concerns.

Post all doors with signage which identifies the paraformaldehyde hazard, prohibits entry, post an emergency contact number. Ensure that all staff are aware of the decontamination in progress.

- 1) Provide a full face mask with formaldehyde filter. Ensure the person has been trained and fit tested within the past 12 months through the FHSc Safety office.
- 2) Calculate the volume of the piece of equipment in question. Use 0.3gms of solid paraformaldehyde per cubic foot of air.
- 3) Obtain an explosion proof fry pan and place into it the paraformaldehyde crystals. Too much paraformaldehyde will cause it to adhere to the equipment surface and it will be difficult to remove. Ensure that humidity is adequate (70% range)
- 4) Place the pan into the piece of equipment to be treated, allowing the electrical cord to protrude. Set the pan to med high. Encase the piece of equipment in plastic sheeting to ensure that additional air volume is minimal and ensuring that no air leaks to the outside. Have inspection done by a second person. You should be able to see the pan and the crystals.
- 5) Plug the fry pan in and wait for all of the paraformaldehyde to enter the air. Unplug the pan when the paraformaldehyde has evaporated. If a leak becomes evident, wear the face mask. If the leak is large, the decontamination may not be effective.
- 6) Exit the room. Lock the room. Review that signs are posted.
- 7) Contact time should be 2 hrs for open surfaces and up to 8 hrs if diffusion is required, such as a filter.

8) When the time has expired, in HSC contact Engineering at 75501 and request full air exhaust to your quadrant. Obtain confirmation that full exhaust is in effect before opening equipment

9) Don the full face mask, enter the room, and remove the plastic to allow the air to exhaust. Ensure a second person is in contact in case a problem arises.

10) Allow at least 30 min for the paraformaldehyde to dissipate. Check for odour to confirm. Odour threshold of formaldehyde is equal to the TLV.

11) When complete, contact Engineering to discontinue full exhaust.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact extension 24956 or [cassidk@mcmaster.ca](mailto:cassidk@mcmaster.ca)