Invisible Threats: Exposure to Harmful Substances & Workplace Environments Fatality Report



Worker Dies After Toxic Chemical Exposure Inside ISO Tank

On March 22, 2021, at approximately 10:30 a.m., a worker was fatally exposed to hazardous chemicals while pressure-washing the interior of an ISO tank. The employee had been cleaning the weld seam near the tank’s heel when he was overcome by toxic vapors in the confined space. A coworker and the site manager discovered him incapacitated but still breathing. He was transported to a hospital, where he later died from chemical exposure.

OSHA determined that the employee had been working inside the enclosed tank without sufficient atmospheric monitoring, ventilation, or respiratory protection—conditions that allowed toxic vapors to accumulate to dangerous levels. This incident highlights the deadly nature of invisible airborne contaminants, especially in confined spaces like tanks, trailers, vessels, and pits, where hazardous atmospheres can form quickly and without warning.

Source: Osha.gov