

Focus on IFA's work

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GESTIS International Limit Values database

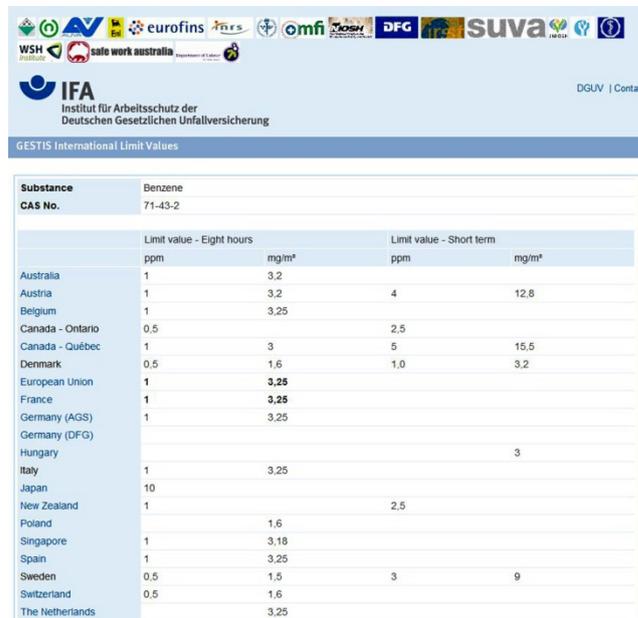
Problem

The most diverse substances, substance mixtures and formulations are encountered at workplaces throughout trade and industry. The employer is obliged to assess the risk to which an employee is exposed during the performance of his or her tasks. Workplace limit values are an important aid for the assessment of risks. Since such limit values do not exist in Germany for all substances, use is also made of limit values from other countries, where available, as a supplementary aid in risk assessment.

In the past, it was difficult to ascertain what atmospheric limit values, if any, were available for a particular substance in other European countries or, for example, in the USA, since the lists had to be consulted individually. A database was to enable the data to be found more rapidly.

Activities

A joint project conducted by European OH&S institutes as part of the EU project under the heading "Analytical methods for chemical agents" resulted in the formation of a working group which set itself the objective of compiling an up-to-date overview of the atmospheric limit values. Under the overall responsibility of the IFA, a database was created containing atmospheric limit values from 14 European countries and the USA, Canada (Quebec, Ontario), Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Singapore and also the EU limit values.



Substance	Limit value - Eight hours		Limit value - Short term	
	ppm	mg/m ³	ppm	mg/m ³
Australia	1	3,2		
Austria	1	3,2	4	12,8
Belgium	1	3,25		
Canada - Ontario	0,5		2,5	
Canada - Québec	1	3	5	15,5
Denmark	0,5	1,6	1,0	3,2
European Union	1	3,25		
France	1	3,25		
Germany (AGS)	1	3,25		
Germany (DFG)				
Hungary				3
Italy	1	3,25		
Japan	10			
New Zealand	1		2,5	
Poland		1,6		
Singapore	1	3,18		
Spain	1	3,25		
Sweden	0,5	1,5	3	9
Switzerland	0,5	1,6		
The Netherlands		3,25		

Display of all atmospheric limit values for benzene in the database

To date, only atmospheric limit values which are binding in nature in the countries concerned have been gathered. The database is to be extended continually and updated twice a year.

Since the beginning of 2012 the database is also available as iOS and Android app for smart-phones.

Results and Application

The GESTIS International Limit Values database is accessible (in English) to the public at www.dguv.de/ifa/gestis-limit-values.

Information on over 1500 hazardous substances, mixtures and formulations can be searched for by substance name and CAS number. Since the substance names cannot be related unambiguously to a particular substance in all cases, the CAS number is recommended as the initial search criterion.

The substance data sheets contain specific information on:

- Atmospheric limit values
- Short-time limit values
- Particle fractions to which the atmospheric limit value relates (in the case of particulates)

Area of Application

Employees and employers in all areas of industry; production plants, workshops; agricultural and construction enterprises, and all other sectors; initial and further training; prevention; investigation into cases of occupational disease; assessment of working areas.

Additional Information

- www.dguv.de/ifa/gestis-limit-values

Expert Assistance

IFA, Division 2: Chemical and biological hazards