Right to Know

Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet

Common Name: **LITHIUM CARBONATE**

Synonyms: Dilithium Carbonate; Carbolith

Chemical Name: Carbonic Acid, Dilithium Salt

Date: September 1998 Revision: January 2008

CAS Number: 554-13-2

RTK Substance Number: 1124

DOT Number: None

EMERGENCY RESPONDERS >>>> SEE BACK PAGE

Description and Use

Lithium Carbonate is a white, light, odorless powder. It is used in the production of glazes on ceramics and porcelain, in varnishes and dyes, as a coating on arc welding electrodes, and in lubricating greases. It is also used as medication to treat certain types of mental illness.

Hazard Summary

Hazard Rating	NJDOH	NFPA
HEALTH	1	-
FLAMMABILITY	0	-
REACTIVITY	0	-

TERATOGEN
POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE

Hazard Rating Key: 0=minimal; 1=slight; 2=moderate; 3=serious; 4=severe

Reasons for Citation

- **Lithium Carbonate** is on the Right to Know Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by DEP and EPA.
- This chemical is on the Special Health Hazard Substance List.

- **Lithium Carbonate** can affect you when inhaled.
- **Lithium Carbonate** may be a TERATOGEN. HANDLE WITH EXTREME CAUTION.
- Contact can irritate the skin and eyes.
- Inhaling **Lithium Carbonate** can irritate the nose and throat.
- **Lithium Carbonate** can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- Inhaling **Lithium Carbonate** can irritate the lungs. Higher exposures may cause a build-up of fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema), a medical emergency.
- **Lithium Carbonate** can cause headache, muscle weakness, confusion, seizures and coma.
- **Lithium Carbonate** may cause a skin allergy.
- High exposure may affect the thyroid gland and heart function, and may damage the kidneys.

SEE GLOSSARY ON PAGE 5.

FIRST AID

Eye Contact

- Immediately flush with large amounts of water for at least 15 minutes, lifting upper and lower lids. Remove contact lenses, if worn, while rinsing.

Skin Contact

- Quickly remove contaminated clothing. Immediately wash contaminated skin with large amounts of soap and water.

Inhalation

- Remove the person from exposure.
- Begin rescue breathing (using universal precautions) if breathing has stopped and CPR if heart action has stopped.
- Transfer promptly to a medical facility.
- Medical observation is recommended for 24 to 48 hours after overexposure, as pulmonary edema may be delayed.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

CHEMTREC: 1-800-424-9300

NJDEP Hotline: 1-877-927-6337

National Response Center: 1-800-424-8802

Workplace Exposure Limits

No occupational exposure limits have been established for **Lithium Carbonate**. However, it may pose a health risk. Always follow safe work practices.

- **Lithium Carbonate** may be a teratogen in humans. All contact with this chemical should be reduced to the lowest possible level.

Determining Your Exposure

- Read the product manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and the label to determine product ingredients and important safety and health information about the product mixture.
- For each individual hazardous ingredient, read the New Jersey Department of Health Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet, available on the RTK website (www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb) or in your facility's RTK Central File or Hazard Communication Standard file.
- You have a right to this information under the New Jersey Worker and Community Right to Know Act, the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Act if you are a public worker in New Jersey, and under the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) if you are a private worker.
- The New Jersey Right to Know Act requires most employers to label chemicals in the workplace and requires public employers to provide their employees with information concerning chemical hazards and controls. The federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) and the PEOSH Hazard Communication Standard (N.J.A.C. 12:100-7) require employers to provide similar information and training to their employees.

This Fact Sheet is a summary of available information regarding the health hazards that may result from exposure. Duration of exposure, concentration of the substance and other factors will affect your susceptibility to any of the potential effects described below.

Health Hazard Information

Acute Health Effects
The following acute (short-term) health effects may occur immediately or shortly after exposure to **Lithium Carbonate**:

- Contact can irritate the skin and eyes.
- Inhaling **Lithium Carbonate** can irritate the nose and throat.
- **Lithium Carbonate** can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- Inhaling **Lithium Carbonate** can irritate the lungs causing coughing and/or shortness of breath. Higher exposures may cause a build-up of fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema), a medical emergency, with severe shortness of breath.
- **Lithium Carbonate** can cause headache, muscle weakness, muscle twitching, blurred vision, loss of coordination, confusion, seizures and coma.

Chronic Health Effects
The following chronic (long-term) health effects can occur at some time after exposure to **Lithium Carbonate** and can last for months or years:

Cancer Hazard
- According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health, **Lithium Carbonate** has not been tested for its ability to cause cancer in animals.

Reproductive Hazard
- **Lithium Carbonate** may be a TERATOGEN in humans since it is a teratogen in animals.

Other Effects
- **Lithium Carbonate** may cause a skin allergy. If allergy develops, very low future exposure can cause itching and a skin rash.
- High exposure may affect the thyroid gland and heart function.
- Long-term exposure may damage the kidneys.

Medical

Medical Testing
Before beginning employment and at regular times after that, for frequent or potentially high exposures, the following are recommended:

- Blood tests for *Lithium* level
- Kidney function tests
- Evaluation of thyroid function

If symptoms develop or overexposure is suspected, the following are recommended:

- Consider chest x-ray after acute overexposure
- Evaluation by a qualified allergist can help diagnose skin allergy
- EKG

Any evaluation should include a careful history of past and present symptoms with an exam. Medical tests that look for damage already done are not a substitute for controlling exposure.

Request copies of your medical testing. You have a legal right to this information under the OSHA Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records Standard (29 CFR 1910.1020).

Mixed Exposures
- Smoking can cause heart disease, lung cancer, emphysema, and other respiratory problems. It may worsen respiratory conditions caused by chemical exposure. Even if you have smoked for a long time, stopping now will reduce your risk of developing health problems.

Workplace Controls and Practices

Very toxic chemicals, or those that are reproductive hazards or sensitizers, require expert advice on control measures if a less toxic chemical cannot be substituted. Control measures include: (1) enclosing chemical processes for severely irritating and corrosive chemicals, (2) using local exhaust ventilation for chemicals that may be harmful with a single exposure, and (3) using general ventilation to control exposures to skin and eye irritants. For further information on workplace controls, consult the NIOSH document on Control Banding at www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ctrlbanding/.

The following work practices are also recommended:

- Label process containers.
- Provide employees with hazard information and training.
- Monitor airborne chemical concentrations.
- Use engineering controls if concentrations exceed recommended exposure levels.
- Provide eye wash fountains and emergency showers.
- Wash or shower if skin comes in contact with a hazardous material.
- Always wash at the end of the workshift.
- Change into clean clothing if clothing becomes contaminated.
- Do not take contaminated clothing home.
- Get special training to wash contaminated clothing.
- Do not eat, smoke, or drink in areas where chemicals are being handled, processed or stored.
- Wash hands carefully before eating, smoking, drinking, applying cosmetics or using the toilet.

In addition, the following may be useful or required:

- Use a vacuum or a wet method to reduce dust during clean-up. DO NOT DRY SWEEP.

Personal Protective Equipment

The OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Standard (29 CFR 1910.132) requires employers to determine the appropriate personal protective equipment for each hazard and to train employees on how and when to use protective equipment.

The following recommendations are only guidelines and may not apply to every situation.

Gloves and Clothing

- Avoid skin contact with **Lithium Carbonate**. Wear personal protective equipment made from material which can not be permeated or degraded by this substance. Safety equipment suppliers and manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove and clothing material for your operation.
- Safety equipment manufacturers recommend *Rubber* for gloves and DuPont *Tychem® Polycoat*, *QC*, *CPF 1*, *SL* and *CPF 2* or equivalent as protective materials for clothing for *dry pharmaceutical chemicals*.
- All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.

Eye Protection

- Wear eye protection with side shields or goggles.
- Wear a face shield along with goggles when working with corrosive, highly irritating or toxic substances.

Respiratory Protection

Improper use of respirators is dangerous. Respirators should only be used if the employer has implemented a written program that takes into account workplace conditions, requirements for worker training, respirator fit testing, and medical exams, as described in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134).

- Where the potential exists for overexposure, use a NIOSH approved air-purifying, particulate filter respirator with an N95 filter. More protection is provided by a full facepiece respirator than by a half-mask respirator, and even greater protection is provided by a powered-air purifying respirator.
- Where the potential for high exposure exists, use a NIOSH approved supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode. For increased protection use in combination with an auxiliary self-contained breathing apparatus operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode.

Fire Hazards

If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in the OSHA Fire Brigades Standard (29 CFR 1910.156).

- Use dry chemical, CO_2, water spray or foam as extinguishing agents.
- POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE, including *Lithium Oxides*.
- Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.
- **Lithium Carbonate** may ignite combustibles (wood, paper and oil).

Spills and Emergencies

If employees are required to clean-up spills, they must be properly trained and equipped. The OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (29 CFR 1910.120) may apply.

If **Lithium Carbonate** is spilled, take the following steps:

- Evacuate personnel and secure and control entrance to the area.
- Eliminate all ignition sources.
- Collect powdered material in the most convenient and safe manner and deposit in sealed containers.
- Ventilate and wash area after clean-up is complete.
- It may be necessary to contain and dispose of **Lithium Carbonate** as a HAZARDOUS WASTE. Contact your state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or your regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for specific recommendations.

Handling and Storage

Prior to working with **Lithium Carbonate** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.

- **Lithium Carbonate** reacts violently with FLUORINE.
- **Lithium Carbonate** is not compatible with STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC); REDUCING AGENTS; COMBUSTIBLES; ORGANICS; OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); and CALCIUM HYDROXIDE.
- Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from ALUMINUM, COPPER and ZINC.

Occupational Health Information Resources

The New Jersey Department of Health offers multiple services in occupational health. These services include providing informational resources, educational materials, public presentations, and industrial hygiene and medical investigations and evaluations.

For more information, please contact:

New Jersey Department of Health
Right to Know
PO Box 368
Trenton, NJ 08625-0368
Phone: 609-984-2202
Fax: 609-984-7407
E-mail: rtk@doh.state.nj.us
Web address: http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/rtkweb

GLOSSARY

ACGIH is the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. They publish guidelines called Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) for exposure to workplace chemicals.

Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs) are established by the EPA. They describe the risk to humans resulting from once-in-a lifetime, or rare, exposure to airborne chemicals.

Boiling point is the temperature at which a substance can change its physical state from a liquid to a gas.

A **carcinogen** is a substance that causes cancer.

The **CAS number** is unique, identifying number, assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service, to a specific chemical.

CFR is the Code of Federal Regulations, which are the regulations of the United States government.

A **combustible** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that will burn.

A **corrosive** substance is a gas, liquid or solid that causes destruction of human skin or severe corrosion of containers.

DEP is the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

DOT is the Department of Transportation, the federal agency that regulates the transportation of chemicals.

EPA is the Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency responsible for regulating environmental hazards.

ERG is the Emergency Response Guidebook. It is a guide for emergency responders for transportation emergencies involving hazardous substances.

Emergency Response Planning Guideline (ERPG) values are intended to provide estimates of concentration ranges where one reasonably might anticipate observing adverse effects.

A **fetus** is an unborn human or animal.

A **flammable** substance is a solid, liquid, vapor or gas that will ignite easily and burn rapidly.

The **flash point** is the temperature at which a liquid or solid gives off vapor that can form a flammable mixture with air.

IARC is the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a scientific group.

Ionization Potential is the amount of energy needed to remove an electron from an atom or molecule. It is measured in electron volts.

IRIS is the Integrated Risk Information System database maintained by federal EPA. The database contains information on human health effects that may result from exposure to various chemicals in the environment.

LEL or **Lower Explosive Limit**, is the lowest concentration of a combustible substance (gas or vapor) in the air capable of continuing an explosion.

mg/m^3 means milligrams of a chemical in a cubic meter of air. It is a measure of concentration (weight/volume).

A **mutagen** is a substance that causes mutations. A **mutation** is a change in the genetic material in a body cell. Mutations can lead to birth defects, miscarriages, or cancer.

NFPA is the National Fire Protection Association. It classifies substances according to their fire and explosion hazard.

NIOSH is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It tests equipment, evaluates and approves respirators, conducts studies of workplace hazards, and proposes standards to OSHA.

NTP is the National Toxicology Program which tests chemicals and reviews evidence for cancer.

OSHA is the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards.

PEOSHA is the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards in public workplaces.

Permeated is the movement of chemicals through protective materials.

PIH is a DOT designation for chemicals which are Poison Inhalation Hazards.

ppm means parts of a substance per million parts of air. It is a measure of concentration by volume in air.

A **reactive** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that releases energy under certain conditions.

STEL is a Short Term Exposure Limit which is usually a 15-minute exposure that should not be exceeded at any time during a work day.

A **teratogen** is a substance that causes birth defects by damaging the fetus.

UEL or **Upper Explosive Limit** is the highest concentration in air above which there is too much fuel (gas or vapor) to begin a reaction or explosion.

Vapor Density is the ratio of the weight of a given volume of one gas to the weight of another (usually *Hydrogen*), at the same temperature and pressure.

The **vapor pressure** is a measure of how readily a liquid or a solid mixes with air at its surface. A higher vapor pressure indicates a higher concentration of the substance in air and therefore increases the likelihood of breathing it in.

Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet

Emergency Responders Quick Reference

Common Name: **LITHIUM CARBONATE**

Synonyms: Dilithium Carbonate; Carbolith
CAS No: 554-13-2
Molecular Formula: Li_2CO_3
RTK Substance No: 1124
Description: White, light, odorless powder

HAZARD DATA

Hazard Rating	Firefighting	Reactivity
1 - Health **0 - Fire** **0 - Reactivity** **DOT#:** None **ERG Guide #:** None **Hazard Class:** None	Use dry chemical, CO_2, water spray or foam as extinguishing agents. POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE including *Lithium Oxides*. Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool. May ignite combustibles (wood, paper and oil).	**Lithium Carbonate** reacts violently with FLUORINE. **Lithium Carbonate** is not compatible with STRONG ACIDS (such as HYDROCHLORIC, SULFURIC and NITRIC); REDUCING AGENTS; COMBUSTIBLES; ORGANICS; OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE); and CALCIUM HYDROXIDE.

SPILL/LEAKS

Isolation Distance:

Spills: 25 meters (75 feet)

Fire: 800 meters (1/2 mile)

Collect powdered material in the most convenient and safe manner and deposit in sealed containers.

Can harm the aquatic environment.

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

Odor Threshold:	Odorless
Flash Point:	Noncombustible
Vapor Pressure:	0 mm Hg at 68°F (20°C)
Specific Gravity:	2.1 (water = 1)
Water Solubility:	Slightly soluble
Boiling Point:	2,390°F (1,310°C)
Melting Point:	1,144°F (618°C)
pH:	11.2
Molecular Weight:	73.89

EXPOSURE LIMITS

No occupational exposure limits have been established.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Gloves:	Rubber
Coveralls:	DuPont Tychem® Polycoat, QC, CPF 1, SL and CPF 2 or equivalent for *dry pharmaceutical chemicals*
Respirator:	APR with High efficiency filters, or Supplied air

HEALTH EFFECTS

Eyes:	Irritation
Skin:	Irritation, itching and rash
Inhalation:	Nose, throat and lung irritation with coughing and shortness of breath (pulmonary edema) Headache, muscle twitching, confusion and seizures

FIRST AID AND DECONTAMINATION

Remove the person from exposure.

Flush eyes with large amounts of water for at least 15 minutes. Remove contact lenses if worn.

Quickly remove contaminated clothing and wash contaminated skin with large amounts of soap and water.

Begin artificial respiration if breathing has stopped and CPR if necessary.

Transfer to a medical facility.

Medical observation is recommended as symptoms may be delayed.