# Chem-Lab to Shop Floor: Chemical Hazard Awareness Beyond MSDS Fatality File



## US Department of Labor cites chemical company after two workers die, one sickened following exposure to respiratory hazards

**What Happened**

Two workers died and a third was sickened at a Daikin America chemical facility in Alabama after being exposed to toxic fluorocarbons during a routine maintenance task involving a processing line break, nitrogen purge, and equipment venting. Two of the exposed employees were treated for respiratory failure at local hospitals but later died – one on August 10, 2021, and the other on September 28, 2021. A third employee survived but suffered a serious, long-lasting illness.

**What Went Wrong**

The investigation found Daikin America failed to institute critical safe work practices required under OSHA's Process Safety Management standard, failed to ensure proper respiratory protection and PPE, failed to perform air monitoring, and failed to communicate the chemical hazards involved in the task to workers. OSHA cited the company for nine serious and one willful violation, with $232,103 in proposed penalties.

**The Bottom Line**

"Two families will enter 2022 without their loved ones and one family will have the long-lasting memory of a frightening and serious illness," said OSHA Area Director Ramona Morris. Knowing a chemical exists on a Safety Data Sheet is not the same as knowing what protection a specific task requires. Air monitoring and clear procedures are the only barrier between routine maintenance and fatal exposure.

**Source:** https://www.osha.gov/