

Contact

If you would like more information about Walk the Talk or ISOPA, please visit www.isopa.org or contact:

ISOPA – European Diisocyanate and Polyol Producers Association

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What is ISOPA?

ISOPA represents European manufacturers of aromatic diisocyanates and polyols. The following leading materials suppliers are members of ISOPA:



Elastogran



■ BASF Group

HUNTSMAN

REPSOL
YPF



Walk the Talk

HANDS-ON HELP FOR **SAFE** CHEMICAL USE



What is Walk the Talk?



Did you know that 80% of accidents in the industry are behaviour-related and could be avoided just by making a few simple adjustments to the way you work? That is why the member companies of ISOPA (the European Diisocyanate and Polyol Producers Association) have launched an industry-wide programme called Walk the Talk, aimed at promoting safer use of the chemicals used in making polyurethanes.



What are the initiative's objectives?

The initiative's objective is to improve health and safety standards across the European polyurethanes industry by raising awareness and increasing understanding of best practice. In turn, this should lead to a positive change in behaviour and a significant reduction in the number of accidents in the workplace.

In a partnership between customers and suppliers, the initiative aims to:

- Develop your own and your employees' awareness of the risks involved in the use of chemicals
- Help you to avoid unacceptable exposure to chemicals
- Offer you advice on managing spillages, first aid and fire
- By introducing a package of recommendations suitable for all users of diisocyanates and associated chemicals

How does the programme work?

Drawing on the experience of our member companies and their customers, ISOPA has established a series of recommendations for safely using the polyurethane chemicals and how to act in an emergency. Every programme will be tailored to your individual needs depending on the type of materials you handle. Core modules have been created for MDI, TDI and auxiliary materials and address:

- Physical and chemical properties of the material
- The effect the chemical may have on your health
- Examples of unsafe and safe behaviour
- Good personal hygiene in the workplace
- Cleanliness and safety in the workplace
- Good ventilation
- How to use the personal protective equipment correctly
- Dealing with spillages

- First aid equipment
- Emergency procedures in case of exposure to the chemical or to fire

Why is Walk the Talk so important?

Diisocyanates are hazardous chemicals which pose risks unless they are used properly. While the industry has a good record and reputation for safety, there are still cases of injuries occurring as a result of improper handling of diisocyanates.

It is the responsibility of everyone in the polyurethanes industry to behave in a safe and appropriate way when using these chemicals as compliance with local and EU regulations is in the interest of both users and producers. You must also prepare for the implications of REACH. It is far better to address safety in a positive, proactive way than wait for accidents to happen before doing anything.

If the industry embraces Walk the Talk, we anticipate a number of benefits to be realised.

For your industry:

- Better credibility and reputation
- An industry-wide culture of continuous improvement
- Preparation for REACH

For your company:

- Fewer accidents and injuries
- Increased production and less disruption
- Better relations with the site community and local authorities

For your employees:

- A safer and cleaner workplace
- Fewer accidents and injuries, leading to an improved quality of life

How will Walk the Talk fit into my company's existing environmental, health and safety measures?

If your business already has a programme in place, it may be that Walk the Talk can complement it. On the other hand, you might be able to offer new ideas to ISOPA to help improve the Walk the Talk programme – we are always open to suggestions.

Remember, this programme only focuses on behavioural safety – it doesn't address the legal requirements of businesses in terms of site safety instructions or regulations.

How do we introduce Walk the Talk into our workplace?

In the first instance, contact your regular polyurethane chemicals suppliers. A representative of your chemicals supplier will then visit your site to discuss your situation and needs.

Among other things, they will:

- Familiarise themselves with the current practices
- Identify potentially sensitive issues
- Agree on key areas for training

The core programme will be tailored to suit your individual situation and your chemical supplier will work with you to help communicate the programme to your workforce.

Walk the Talk works on the basis of continuous improvement. It is a constantly evolving process as we strive for increasingly better standards, so regular follow-ups, dialogue and teamwork between customers and suppliers is important to ensure the success of the initiative.

It is important that you get involved in this programme so that we can ensure a good safety standard across the whole industry. Your commitment to introduce the measures as part of your business operations, and to prepare for regular follow-ups, is essential.

What should we expect from a PU systems house?

All systems houses are expected to join the programme. If your chemical supplier is not yet aware of the initiative, please invite them to join. Ask them to contact their own polyurethane chemicals supplier.

