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Vapour Retardation: a technology that significantly reduces methylene chloride emissions

Formulators of methylene chloride have developed vapour retarded products, to restrict the vapourisation of solvent during paint stripping. The technology reduces the vapourisation rate of formulated methylene chloride by more than 95% compared to the pure solvent (UK formulators test method 127-1). As a result, amounts used and emissions of methylene chloride during paint stripping are greatly reduced - making it safer and even more effective.

How does vapour retardation work?

Small amounts of speciality waxes and thickening agents are added to the methylene chloride paint stripper formulation. Following application, these additives rapidly form a skin over the surface, suppressing further evaporation of methylene chloride. Under the skin, the solvent does the job of removing the paint.

What are the benefits of reduced evaporation?

By "sealing" the methylene chloride onto the paint surface:

- the stripping performance is enhanced
- the quantity of solvent needed for the job is considerably lower
- operator exposure to methylene chloride vapour is significantly reduced
- paint stripper wastage is lowered
- the operation is safer and more effective

Are such products available today?

In many European countries, vapour retarded methylene chloride paint strippers are available and on sale, for the consumer and professional market. This allows the technical benefits of methylene chloride to be utilised in a more efficient and safer way, provided the recommended safety measures are taken.