

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Safe Work Australia

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000293

Senator Leyonhjelm asked on 22 October 2015 on proof Hansard page 37

Question

SWA - APVMA labels and intrinsic hazards

Senator LEYONHJELM: At the last hearing of the committee and also you said a few moments ago that the APVMA does not look at intrinsic hazards and that such hazards might be missed by the APVMA. Now, my information is this is incorrect. Intrinsic hazards are not missed by the APVMA and, in fact, it undertakes extensive risk assessments and ensures only intrinsic hazards not appropriately mitigated to a negligible level through formulation or prescribed use instructions appear as a hazard or a precautionary statement on the label. Do you agree with that or not?

Ms Collins: We have found that there are labels that do not have that intrinsic hazard information on the label.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Are you going to provide them?

Ms Collins: I can provide you with examples of those, yes.

Answer

Please refer to the examples of labels provided in the response to EMSQ15-000291. The examples illustrate that not all intrinsic hazards are communicated on the APVMA approved label.

It is not correct to state that 'only intrinsic hazards not appropriately mitigated to a negligible level through formulation or prescribed use instructions appear as a hazard or a precautionary statement on the label'. The safety directions on the APVMA labels include information on some intrinsic hazards along with instructions on how to control the risks of these hazards.

For example (see Example 6 in the response to EMSQ15-000291) the label for Axichem Petulant 250 EC Fungicide contains the following statements outlining the intrinsic hazards of the product:

- Harmful if swallowed
- Will damage eyes
- Will irritate nose throat and skin

There are also instructions on the label to mitigate the risks arising from these hazards:

- Avoid contact with eyes and skin
- Do not inhale vapour
- Wear cotton overalls, washable hat, elbow length gloves, goggles, and disposable fume mask.

However, there is no information on the label about the combustion hazard, nor any information on how to mitigate this risk.

The safety data sheet for the product includes the hazard statement 'Combustible liquid' with the associated precautionary statement:

- 'Keep away from heat, hot surfaces, sparks, open flames, and other ignition sources, no smoking.'