



# PROTECTING CONSUMER HEALTH

## Code of Practice for 2-Butanone Oxime (MEKO) and Ventilation Best Practices

### Code of Practice for 2-Butanone oxime (MEKO)

Health Canada and Environment Canada have published a Code of Practice for 2-Butanone oxime or MEKO, a chemical commonly used as an anti-skinning agent in the formulation of alkyd or solvent borne paints, primers, varnishes and stains. MEKO is not found in any of the widespread latex or waterborne products.

Codes of Practice are voluntary tools that support reasonable product care practices and create a national understanding of recommended practices. The objective of this code is to help reduce the general public's inhalation exposure to MEKO during and immediately following interior application of consumer alkyd paint and coatings products.

The code recommends that companies using MEKO in consumer alkyd paint and coating products intended for indoor use:

- Reduce the concentration of MEKO to the lowest level that is technically and economically feasible;
- Incorporate a ventilation statement on the label of these products; and
- Develop an educational campaign to inform consumers how to achieve well-ventilated conditions during and following use of alkyd paint and coating products used indoors.

The Canadian paint manufacturing industry, which complies with all national and international standards, fully supports this new code by already reducing the use of MEKO to its minimum levels and it is currently searching for suitable replacements. The Canadian Paint and Coatings Association (CPCA) has developed educational communication tools to further ensure that all consumers adopt recommended practices with regards to ventilation.

### Educational Campaign: A Painter's Guide to Ventilation Best Practices

This Information Refers Only to Interior Alkyd (or Oil-based) Paint Containing 2-Butanone oxime (MEKO)

Since clean air is essential for good health, the quality of indoor air is particularly important. Good ventilation is needed indoors whenever you use paint products containing chemical substances, specifically alkyd paint products which contain solvents and 2-Butanone oxime (MEKO), that are labelled with warning statements about ventilation.

Some practices to follow when using alkyd paint and coating products indoors:

- Always read, understand and carefully follow all ventilation requirements indicated on labels;
- Take measures to maximize the amount of fresh air where you paint; you should not rely on home heating or cooling systems to provide fresh air. Try to schedule painting so that you can open windows and doors to the outside;
- It is recommended that you create cross-ventilation when painting by opening windows and doors that are across from each other and/or using a fan to blow air outdoors (if there is no warning on the paint label instructing against the use of electric motor fans). Kitchen and/or bathroom fans that are vented outside can also help;
- Diluting indoor air with outdoor fresh air is not always possible in poorly ventilated areas of a house or a building, such as large rooms with few windows, so an additional ventilation source, such as a fan, may be needed;
- Take fresh air breaks while painting and keep young children, pregnant women and people with breathing problems away from freshly painted rooms. Leave painted areas if you experience eye watering, headaches, dizziness or breathing problems;
- Cover your paint can during use and quickly dispose of rags and accessories after you have finished with your project. Unused or leftover alkyd paint can be disposed of through the paint recycling program in your province;;
- Remember to continue using proper ventilation for two to three days after you finish painting;
- MEKO and other chemicals may still be present in low VOC (volatile organic compound) alkyd paint so remember to always create well-ventilated conditions;
- It is a misconception that infrequent use of alkyd paint poses no health risk. Proper precautions and ventilation are required every time the product is used.