Isocyanate Suspected in Death

A woman with a history of asthma was working on a lamination process known to release an isocyanate. She developed an acute attack of asthma which failed to respond to her aerosol medication.

Co-workers took her to a nearby industrial medicine clinic, which was not yet open for the day. After this delay, she was taken by ambulance to a hospital, but suffered respiratory arrest and went into coma before she arrived. She died a month later.

It is important to call an ambulance immediately at the first sign of respiratory distress when someone is working with isocyanates, which are known to have respiratory hazards. First aid personnel and people who work with asthmatics must be educated about what to do in case of an emergency and to be aware of any warning signs. In case of severe asthma attack don’t delay, call for an ambulance. Anyone working with isocyanates must be told they can become sensitized to the chemicals causing potentially severe reactions.