

Worker Overcome by Solvent Vapors

A night shift worker was working with his supervisor in an adhesive tape manufacturing plant. They had been monitoring a machine that applied a coat of adhesive to the tape, and were collecting samples, taking 30-minute turns with one another. When the worker went missing, he was found unconscious where he had fallen headfirst into a drum. The drum looked empty, but it had previously contained adhesive. The day shift group leader had washed the drum with the solvent toluene, and the matter was discussed at the time of the shift change meeting.

It appeared that the victim had leaned forward into the drum to continue cleaning it and was overcome by the solvent vapor. He had not used a respirator for protection. He was taken to hospital but never regained consciousness. Cause of death was acute poisoning.