
40 C.F.R. § 798.2250

Dermal toxicity.

- (a) *Purpose.* In the assessment and evaluation of the toxic characteristics of a chemical, the determination of subchronic dermal toxicity may be carried out after initial information on toxicity has been obtained by acute testing. The subchronic dermal study has been designed to permit the determination of the no-observed-effect level and toxic effects associated with continuous or repeated exposure to a test substance for a period of 90 days. The test is not capable of determining those effects that have a long latency period for development (e.g., carcinogenicity and life shortening). It provides information on health hazards likely to arise from repeated exposure by the dermal route over a limited period of time. It will provide information on target organs, the possibilities of accumulation, and can be of use in selecting dose levels for chronic studies and for establishing safety criteria for human exposure.
- (b) *Definitions.* (1) Subchronic dermal toxicity is the adverse effects occurring as a result of the repeated daily exposure of experimental animals to a chemical by dermal application for part (approximately 10 percent) of a life span.
- (2) Dose in a dermal test is the amount of test substance applied to the skin (applied daily in subchronic tests). Dose is expressed as weight of the substance (g, mg) per unit weight of test animal (e.g., mg/kg).
- (3) No-effect level/No-toxic-effect level/No-adverse-effect level/No-observed-effect level is the maximum dose used in a test which produces no observed adverse effects. A no-observed-effect level is expressed in terms of the weight of a test substance given daily per unit weight of test animal (mg/kg).
- (4) Cumulative toxicity is the adverse effects of repeated doses occurring as a result of prolonged action on, or increased concentration of the administered test substance or its metabolites in susceptible tissues.
- (c) *Principle of the test method.* The test substance is applied daily to the skin in graduated doses to several groups of experimental animals, one dose level per unit group, for a period of 90 days. During the period of application the animals are observed daily to detect signs of toxicity. Animals which die during the test are necropsied, and at the conclusion of the test the surviving animals are sacrificed and necropsied and appropriate histopathological examinations carried out.
- (d) *Limit test.* If a test at one dose level of at least 1,000 mg/kg body weight (expected human exposure may indicate the need for a higher dose level), using the procedures described for this study, produces no observable toxic effects and if toxicity would not be expected based upon data of structurally related compounds, then a full study using three dose levels might not be necessary.
- (e) *Test procedures—(1) Animal selection—(i) Species and strain.* A mammalian species shall be used for testing. The rat, rabbit, or guinea pig may be used, although the albino rabbit is preferred. The albino rabbit is preferred because of its size, skin permeability, and extensive data base. Commonly used laboratory strains shall be employed. If another mammalian species is used, the tester shall provide justification/reasoning

for its selection.

(ii) *Age.* Young adult animals shall be used. The following weight ranges at the start of the test are suggested in order to provide animals of a size which facilitates the conduct of the test: rats, 200 to 300 g; rabbits, 2.0 to 3.0 kg; guinea pigs, 350 to 450 g.

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