**WEST System**

GENERAL EPOXY**SAFETY GUIDELINES**

Preventing overexposure starts with limiting your exposure to hazardous materials.

This means more than using respirators, goggles, and protective clothing. While the following guidelines are geared for an industrial setting, they offer guidance to casual epoxy users as well. Consider the following steps to protect yourself from epoxy or other hazardous materials.

* **Step 1**—Make informed decisions about the epoxy products you use. Use the least hazardous product that will do the job. Often you can find a product with minimal health hazards that is adequate or even superior for the job. This can reduce or eliminate the hazard source.
* **Step 2**—Set up a safe shop. Install equipment or use procedures that prevent or reduce exposure. This can include ventilation or specialized storage for hazardous materials. Effective ventilation can range from expensive, high-tech air-filtration and exhaust systems to the basic floor or window fans, and is useful for a wide range of vapors and dust. A dedicated cabinet or isolated area for storing hazardous materials can help reduce exposure.
* **Step 3**—Wear protective equipment (goggles, safety glasses, gloves, respirators, protective clothing, etc.) appropriate for the job at hand. The recommended minimum for most epoxy users is gloves, eye protection, and protective clothing. Protect yourself from epoxy vapors with the use of respiratory protection, which may include an air-purifying respirator with an organic vapor or multi-contaminate cartridge. The approved respiratory protection against epoxy dust, wood dust, and nuisance dust is a dust/mist mask or respirator with an N95 rating or better.

**PREVENTING OVEREXPOSURE TO EPOXY RESINS AND HARDENERS**

The government has not established exposure limits for WEST SYSTEM® Epoxy products. We recommend limiting exposure to the levels approved for the raw materials used in formulating the product, as shown in the product’s MSDS. Practice the following procedures for the safe use and handling of our epoxy products.

Avoid contact with epoxy resin, hardeners, mixed epoxy, and sanding dust from partially cured epoxy. Wear protective gloves and clothing whenever you handle epoxies. Barrier skin creams provide added protection. If you do get resin, hardener, or mixed epoxy on your skin, remove it as soon as possible. Epoxy resin is not water-soluble, use a waterless skin cleanser to remove resin or mixed epoxy from your skin. Epoxy hardener is water-soluble, wash with soap and warm water to remove hardener or sanding dust from your skin. Always wash thoroughly with soap and warm water after using epoxy, removing amine blush, or sanding epoxy. If you spill epoxy on your clothes, change them immediately. Use a skin cleanser to remove any epoxy from you and your clothes. If you cannot completely remove it from your clothes, do not continue to wear them. If it is mixed epoxy, you may wear the clothes again once the epoxy has completely cured. Never use solvents to remove epoxy from your skin.

Stop using the product if you develop a reaction. Resume work only after the symptoms disappear, usually after several days. When you resume work, improve your safety precautions to prevent exposure to epoxy, its vapors, and sanding dust. If problems persist, discontinue use and consult a physician.

Protect your eyes from contact with epoxy resin, hardeners, mixed epoxy, and sanding dust by wearing appropriate eye protection. If epoxy gets in your eyes, immediately flush them with water under low pressure for 15 minutes. If discomfort persists, seek medical attention.

Avoid breathing concentrated epoxy vapors and sanding dust. All of our epoxies have a low volatile organic content (VOC), but vapors can build up in unvented spaces. Providing ample ventilation when working with epoxy in confined spaces, such as boat interiors, is important in preventing overexposure. When you can’t adequately ventilate your workspace, wear appropriate respiratory protection.

Provide ventilation and wear a dust/mist mask or respirator when sanding epoxy, especially partially cured epoxy. Breathing partially cured epoxy dust increases your risk of sensitization. Although epoxy cures quickly to a sandable solid, it may take over two weeks at room temperature, or elevated-temperature post-curing, to cure completely.

Avoid ingesting epoxy. Wash thoroughly after handling epoxy, especially before eating or smoking. If you swallow epoxy, rinse your mouth with water. DO NOT induce vomiting. Hardeners are corrosive and can cause additional harm if vomited. Call a physician immediately. Refer to First Aid procedures on the product’s [Safety Data Sheet](https://www.westsystem.com/safety/safety-data-sheets/).

Keeping your workshop clean to avoid incidental contact is important in preventing overexposure. Avoid touching door handles, light switches, and containers when you have epoxy residue on your gloves because you may touch them later without gloves on. Clean up spills with a scraper, collecting as much material as possible. Follow up with absorbent towels. Use sand, clay or other inert absorbent material to contain large spills. DO NOT use sawdust or other fine cellulose materials to absorb hardeners. Clean resin or mixed epoxy residue with acetone, lacquer thinner, or alcohol. Follow all safety warnings on solvent containers. Clean hardener residue with warm soapy water. You may reclaim uncontaminated resin or hardener for use. DO NOT dispose of hardener in a trash receptacle containing sawdust or other fine cellulose materials, they can spontaneously combust.