

Butanone (methyl ethyl ketone, MEK)

Australia | Safework Australia

Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing

Butanone (CAS 78-93-3) is also known as methyl ethyl ketone (MEK). It's a colourless, flammable liquid with a sweet acetone-like smell.



Butanone is found in paints, glues and finishes because it quickly evaporates in air and will dissolve in many substances.

Examples of work and processes involving butanone include:

- as a solvent in the application of protective coatings and adhesives
- magnetic tape production
- dewaxing of lubricating oils
- extraction solvent in food processing
- making varnishes and glues
- making synthetic rubber
- making paraffin wax
- industrial and automotive paint
- leather cleaning
- laboratory work
- making cleaning agents
- making explosives and smokeless gun powders.



Baseline Testing

A baseline MEK health monitoring medical contains the following tests:

- Demographic, medical and occupational history
- Medical Examination with particular focus on the central nervous system and skin
- Urinalysis – Blood Protein and Sugar
- KINNECT Dr Review and Sign off
- Pathology – Urinary butanone (MEK levels)



Periodic Testing

Periodic health monitoring for MEK consists of:

- KINNECT Dr Review and Sign off
- Pathology – Urinary butanone (MEK levels)

* Results May Trigger an early periodic health assessment



Post Exposure

Post Exposure health monitoring for MEK consists of:

- KINNECT Dr Review and Sign off
- Pathology – Urinary butanone (MEK levels)

* Results May Trigger an early periodic health assessment



Exit Testing: Termination of work in Butanone process

An MEK exit medical consists of the following tests:

- Demographic, medical and occupational history
- Medical Examination with particular focus on the central nervous system and skin
- Urinalysis – Blood Protein and Sugar
- Pathology – Urinary butanone (MEK levels)
- KINNECT Dr Review and Sign off



Biological Exposure Windows

Urine samples should be collected at the end of shift.

Please note this information should be taken into consideration by those planning and administering the health monitoring program.



Further Information

Safework Australia health monitoring guidance for Butanone (methyl ethyl ketone, MEK):

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-and-publications/guidance-materials/health-monitoring-butanone>

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