



Standard Terminology Relating to Occupational Health and Safety¹

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1. Scope

1.1 The terms in this standard are used in the fields of occupational health and of safety. The terms are used to describe the limits of exposure under different conditions, the meanings of terms used in describing events and the types of items measured. They will commonly be used to express the effect of an event or the limit of a chemical exposure on human beings.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

[E591 Practice for Safety and Health Requirements Relating to Occupational Exposure to Ozone \(Withdrawn 1990\)](#)³

[E752 Practice for Safety and Health Requirements Relating to Occupational Exposure to Carbon Disulfide \(Withdrawn 1995\)](#)³

[E848 Guide for Safety and Health Requirements Relating to Occupational Exposure to Water-Insoluble Chromates](#)

[E849 Practice for Safety and Health Requirements Relating to Occupational Exposure to Asbestos \(Withdrawn 1991\)](#)³

[E1132 Practice for Health Requirements Relating to Occupational Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica](#)

[E1156 Practice for Health Requirements for Occupational Exposure to Synthetic Amorphous Silica \(Withdrawn 1999\)](#)³

[E2523 Terminology for Metalworking Fluids and Operations](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Health and safety terms specific to metalworking fluids and the metalworking environment are found in Terminology [E2523](#).

¹ This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E34 on Occupational Health and Safety and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E34.01 on Terminology.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

3.2 Generic Terms and their Definitions:

3.2.1 *ceiling limit*—an exposure which shall not be exceeded during any part of the workday. If instantaneous monitoring is not feasible, then the ceiling limit shall be assessed as a 15-min time-weighted average exposure which shall not be exceeded at any time over a working day except for substances which cause immediate irritation upon short exposure.

3.2.2 *occupational exposure limit XXXXX, “generic”*—the maximum time weighted average (TWA) concentration to which nearly all workers may be repeatedly subjected for a normal 8- to 10-h workday, 40-h workweek without known adverse health effects.

3.2.3 *short-term exposure limit (STEL)*—the 15-min time-weighted average exposure which shall not be exceeded at any time during a work day, even if the Occupational Exposure Limit is not exceeded. Exposures above the Occupational Exposure Limit up to the STEL should not be longer than 15 min and should not occur more than 4 times per day. The minimum interval between these exposures should be 60 min.

3.2.3.1 *Discussion*—The phrase “nearly all workers” only excludes those who are hyper-sensitive to substance exposure or who have known medical conditions which may be aggravated by substance exposure. Thus most workers are included in the group in which no adverse health effects are expected. The phrase “a normal 8 to 10 h workday, 40-h workweek” refers to the type of work being done, that is, what is usually done from one week to the next or one day to the next. It does not refer to length of working time as being the major consideration.

The following specified periods of time must be addressed either by determining a value or by stating the “time” is not addressed:

- workday (number of hours specified)
- workweek (number of hours specified)
- lifetime (that is, cumulative)
- very short term maximum (for example, short-term exposure limit, ceiling, etc.)

Other specified periods of time *may* be addressed.

3.3 Terminology Based on Existing E34 Standards:

3.3.1 *occupational exposure limit to asbestos*—the maximum time weighted average (TWA) number of asbestiform fibers to which nearly all workers may be repeatedly subjected