Potential Hazards
As with any chemical, the likelihood of a reaction and the extent and type of health effect depends on many factors:
- Amount of chemical in indoor air
- Length of time a person is exposed
- Age
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Susceptibility

Be aware of these potential hazards:
- Rashes, swelling from short term skin contact
- Eye irritation, sore throat, cough, fatigue, nausea, dizziness from short term inhalation
- Liver, kidney, lung, digestive system, central nervous system damage from long term or massive exposure
- Fire - avoid using paint in an unventilated area; never expose it to an ignition source such as a spark, lit cigarette, or static electricity
- Explosion, especially if a closed container is exposed to high heat
- Reactivity from mixing with or exposure to other substances, including water

Spray Booths
Spray booths require special precautions:
- Spray booths have built in ventilation systems that provide fresh air in the booth while venting out hazardous substances
  - Always make sure the ventilation system is working properly before painting
- Never use anything that could spark or flame
- Space heaters, hot surfaces, portable lamps or trash that could catch fire should be kept out
- Don’t keep more paint than you need for the job in the booth
- Remove debris from the booth immediately and dispose of it properly
- Have fire extinguishers and/or sprinklers nearby
- Respirators are required when working in a spray booth
Most paint is not an especially high-risk substance, but many paints contain ingredients that can cause health and safety problems. Workers must know the hazards and the basic protective measures that can make painting safe.

**Paint Selection**
Select interior or exterior paint based on location of use. There are two categories of interior paints:
- Water-based
- Oil-based

In general, water-based paints emit fewer chemicals and lower levels of chemical vapors. Make sure to read the label for information about potential health effects or ask the paint supplier.

**Paint Storage**
The most important component of a storage area for paint products is a cabinet designed specifically for storing flammables. Flammables must be stored in a properly labeled flammable cabinet that has appropriate signage. In addition, follow these guidelines for your storage area:
- Set it up in an easily accessible location that is cool, dry, and well-ventilated.
- Install a class-B fire extinguisher and, if metallic powders are present, a class-D fire extinguisher.
- Stock the area with appropriate clean-up equipment.

**Safety Precautions**
Each product has specific safety precautions listed on the label. The following are some basic safety steps to keep in mind when using any paint.
- Always read and follow all the instructions and safety precautions on the label - DO NOT assume you already know how to use the product.
  - The label will tell you what actions to take to reduce hazards and the first aid measures to use if there is a problem.
- There must be plenty of fresh air where you paint - open all doors and windows to the outside (not to hallways).
  - Place a box fan in the window, blowing out to ensure air movement.
  - Continue to provide fresh air after painting - ventilation should be continued for two or three days.
- Follow paint can directions for the safe cleaning of brushes and other equipment.
  - Latex paint usually cleans up with soap and water.
  - Oil-based paint require specific products as listed on the label.
- NEVER use gasoline to clean paint brushes - gasoline is extremely flammable.
- Buy only what you need, and store or throw away the unused amount.
- If you have leftover paint, close the container tightly.
- Follow directions on the paint can on how to dispose of the product.
- Flammable paint must be stored in a Flammable Liquids Storage Cabinet.

**Personal Protective Equipment**
- Clothing that fully covers the skin.
- Gloves that resist specific paint ingredients.
- Eye/face protection if recommended.
- Safety glasses, goggles, hoods or face shields.
- Properly fitted respirators where required.
- Protective skin creams when appropriate.

**When Exposed to a Paint Hazard**
- Inhalation - Get to fresh air immediately. Oxygen or artificial respiration may be needed.
- Skin Contact - Wash with soap and water after removing any contaminated clothing.
- Eye Contact - Flush eyes with warm water for at least fifteen minutes and seek medical attention.