

Diethylene Glycol Monoethyl Ether Air Guidance

MARCH 2026

Diethylene glycol monoethyl ether (DEGEE) belongs to a large chemical group collectively known as glycol ethers. DEGEE is often used as a solvent for chemical manufacturing and in the production of paints, dyes, and other household products.

Diethylene glycol monoethyl ether air exposure sources

- Working in an area that uses or produces DEGEE as part of an industrial or manufacturing process
- Spending time near a facility that uses or releases DEGEE into the outside air
- Background levels of DEGEE in air without a nearby source

Potential health concerns from breathing diethylene glycol monoethyl ether

MDH did not find human studies on the effects of DEGEE. Animal studies show breathing DEGEE can cause respiratory irritation and lung effects at high levels. Overall, toxic effects of breathing DEGEE in lower, non-occupational air concentrations are likely quite low.

Diethylene Glycol Monoethyl Ether Health-Based Values (HBVs)

MDH found sufficient toxicity data to develop HBVs for intermediate and chronic exposures (see table). These HBVs are levels in air that are likely to pose little or no risk to human health over that time period. They are protective of the general populations, including those who are most sensitive to exposure.

Breathing an amount of DEGEE that is above the HBV does not mean

health effects will occur; however, the risk for health effects can increase as the level of exposure and / or time of exposure increases. When HBVs are exceeded, MDH recommends taking steps to reduce or avoid exposures.

Duration	2026 HBV ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	Health Endpoint
Acute _{1hr} (1-hour)	Not derived	--
Acute _{24hr} (24 hours or less)	Not derived	--
Intermediate (>24 hours -~8 years)	20	Respiratory effects
Chronic (>~8 years-lifetime)	2	Respiratory effects
Cancer (lifetime)	Not derived	--