

MIL-H-5606 EXPOSURE: SHORT- AND LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS

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MIL-H-5606 is a petroleum-based hydraulic fluid widely used in military aviation, ground vehicles, and support equipment. Exposure occurs through skin contact, inhalation of mist/vapors, eye exposure, or accidental ingestion.

SHORT-TERM (ACUTE) EFFECTS

1. Skin Irritation:

- Redness, dryness, itching, and dermatitis.
- Caused by defatting of the skin due to petroleum oils.

2. Eye Exposure:

- Burning, tearing, redness, and temporary visual disturbance.

3. Respiratory Exposure:

- Mild throat or lung irritation.
- Occasional headaches or lightheadedness in confined spaces with aerosolized mist.

4. Ingestion:

- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.
- Risk of chemical pneumonitis if aspirated.

5. High-Pressure Injection Injury:

- Rare but severe.
- Hydraulic fluid injected under the skin can cause tissue necrosis and requires emergency surgery.

LONG-TERM (CHRONIC) EFFECTS

1. Chronic Dermatitis:

- Persistent skin dryness, cracking, or eczema from repeated exposure.

2. Sensitization or Allergic Dermatitis:

- Over time, individuals may become hypersensitive, developing severe rashes from small exposures.

3. Neurological Effects (in high, repeated exposures):

- Headaches, fatigue, or concentration problems.
- Typically reversible after exposure stops.

4. Liver and Kidney Stress (rare):

- Seen only in prolonged high-level hydrocarbon exposure.
- Not commonly documented at typical military exposure levels.

5. Carcinogenic Concerns:

- MIL-H-5606 is not classified as a carcinogen.
- Cancer risk considered low.

MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL RISK

- Aircraft maintainers.
- Ground vehicle mechanics.
- Flight line support personnel.
- Hydraulic system repair technicians.

VA DISABILITY CLAIM WRITEUP EXAMPLE

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****Statement in Support of Claim: Exposure to MIL-H-5606 Hydraulic Fluid****

During my military service, I routinely worked with MIL-H-5606 hydraulic fluid as part of aircraft and vehicle maintenance operations. My duties required frequent handling of hydraulic lines, reservoirs, and leak cleanup, which regularly exposed my hands, arms, and sometimes face to the fluid. Protective gloves were not always available or practical during many maintenance tasks.

Throughout my service, I experienced repeated symptoms including skin irritation, redness, cracking, and painful rashes following direct contact with MIL-H-5606. These symptoms became progressively

worse with continued exposure. I also experienced frequent headaches and dizziness when working in confined spaces where mist from leaking or pressurized hydraulic systems accumulated.

Following separation from the military, I continued to have chronic dermatitis affecting my hands and forearms, consistent with long-term exposure to petroleum-based hydraulic fluids. My skin becomes inflamed easily, and flare-ups occur with minimal exposure to oils or similar substances. This condition impacts my daily activities and work capability.

Based on my military occupational specialty, frequent exposure to MIL-H-5606, documented symptoms during and after service, and ongoing chronic skin issues, I believe my condition is directly related to my military service. I request that the VA recognize this disability as service-connected.

Signed,

[Veteran Name]

[Date]