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A staggering number of U.S. workers are affected by toxic chemical exposures. OSHA estimates that 50,000 workers die and over 190,000 develop illnesses every year from occupational exposures, while some experts say the actual numbers are much higher. This includes asbestos diseases like malignant mesothelioma and a multitude of other diseases.

OSHA has standards for what levels of chemical exposures are allowable in the workplace. However, people might be surprised to learn that OSHA standards are often weaker than EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) standards for the same chemicals. This means that OSHA standards allow workers to be occupationally exposed to hazards at levels deemed to be unsafe by the EPA.

A [New York Times article](#) explains how this has happened, and explores whether President Trump's recent nomination for Secretary of Labor is intended to protect American workers or instead, to further weaken OSHA standards.