



Ethanal (Acetaldehyde)

We have recently heard of two incidents involving ethanal (acetaldehyde).

In one, the entire contents of a bottle, probably about 400 cm³ rapidly boiled away, possibly as a result of a pupil dipping a 'clean' teat pipette into it. In the other, a drop of sodium hydroxide solution initiated a reaction of such violence that the contents of the test tube were forcibly ejected.

In one sense, it is not too surprising that there should be such incidents with ethanal, given a boiling point of 21 °C and its known ability to react violently with some reagents.

However, we have had very few such reports over the years, and are therefore particularly concerned at two in a short space of time. We would be interested to hear of any similar incidents with ethanal that you may have encountered.

Please contact the ASE Health and Safety Group at rwhitcher@btinternet.com