

Equilibrium partitioning of organic compounds

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Question 13

In many data sheets for organic chemicals you can find the information that they are 'insoluble in water'. Based on this information, is it safe to say that these chemicals may therefore not have a toxic effect on aquatic organisms?

Answer: The answer is: NO, this statement is incorrect. All chemicals will dissolve in water to some extent. Even if the equilibrium concentration is very small it may be sufficiently high to become toxic to certain aquatic species. Chemicals that are categorized as 'insoluble in water' typically have water solubilities below the mg chemical per L water range. Many chemists consider this, for practical purposes, as insoluble.



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