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## **Methanol Institute Statement: Irkutsk Surrogate Alcohol Poisoning**

**Singapore** – The global Methanol Institute (MI) and its members’ extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of victims and those affected by the recent surrogate alcohol poisoning in Irkutsk, Russia. MI and its members fully support the swift efforts of the authorities and first responders in treating the victims.

Latest reports are that at least 72 people in Irkutsk have died after drinking a contaminated bath water lotion known as “Boyaryshnik,” which typically contains ethanol (ethyl alcohol) as an ingredient and is often consumed as a surrogate alcohol even though the product is labeled as “not for human consumption.” In this case, it appears that methanol (methyl alcohol), which is not for human consumption, was substituted for ethanol and resulted in the poisoning of victims consuming the bath lotion as a surrogate alcohol.

Methanol is a chemical building block for hundreds of products that touch our daily lives, from paints and plastics to solvents and resins. Methanol also is used as a fuel and energy source in a number of countries. Like all global industrial chemicals and fuels, methanol must be used and handled with care. Product stewardship is the number one job of the MI and its members commit significant resources globally to ensure methanol is used and handled safely.

Together with leading global toxicologists, MI develops and administers formal programs in several countries designed to raise awareness, educate and treat methanol poisoning from illicit alcohols. MI also supports innovative technology to help first responders in the timely identification of methanol poisoning symptoms and works to support effective treatment programs and support networks.

MI and the methanol industry will seek to work with Russian officials and related stakeholders to further share these methanol safety tools and materials to protect consumers from the risks of illegal alcohols.

For more information about global efforts and resources to protect consumers from poisoning through illegal alcohol beverages, please visit the MI website: <http://www.methanol.org/bootlegalcohol-prevention/>

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### **About the Methanol Institute**

**The Methanol Institute (MI)** serves as the global trade association for one of the world's most vibrant and innovative industries. Founded in 1989, MI represents methanol producers, distributors, and technology providers in every corner of the globe – from our headquarters in Singapore and regional offices in Washington, D.C., Brussels, and Beijing. MI and its members dedicate significant resources to developing best practices for the safe handling, transportation, and use of methanol. [www.methanol.org](http://www.methanol.org)

Methanol is a liquid chemical that can be derived from natural gas, coal, sustainable biomass, municipal solid waste, and captured carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Global methanol demand in 2016 is forecast to reach approximately 80 million metric ton (MMT) or +100 billion liters, of which 7 million metric tons (8.8 billion liters) is used for blending into gasoline. Methanol is increasingly being used as a cleaner fuel in cook stoves, industrial boilers and marine applications.

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