



GOALS

This safety session should teach employees to:

- Understand the many possible hazards of a chemical spill or leak.
- Know the difference between a minor spill that they can clean up themselves and a major or complicated spill that requires a specially trained cleanup crew.
- Understand the proper procedures to be followed for any chemical leak or spill in their workplace.

Applicable Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.1200 (Hazard communication)



1. Some chemical spills can be very hazardous and may lead to fire or explosion.

- Certain chemicals may react violently upon contact with another chemical, the air, or water.
- Some may release hazardous substances into the air or contaminate the water supply.
- Some may be toxic to persons who are exposed, even briefly.
- Others may be far less serious—simply a nuisance to clean up.

2. Your supervisor may authorize you to clean up minor spills if the following conditions are met:

- You know the identity of the chemical and are authorized to work with it.
- The safety data sheet (SDS) indicates only minor hazards.
- A neutralization or absorption spill kit is available.
- You have any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).
- You know how to dispose of the spilled material and have a proper disposal container.

3. Any of the following conditions would indicate a major or complicated spill requiring a specially trained cleanup crew:

- An unknown chemical or a mixture of chemicals.
- A known material that the SDS shows to be highly toxic, highly corrosive, flammable, reactive, or radioactive.
- The spill is in a public area or could spread through the ventilation or drainage system to other areas.
- You or any coworkers in the area are unsure of the proper method of cleanup.

4. The company's emergency response plan may have more specific instructions for major spills, but these are some general rules:

- Immediately warn your supervisor and area occupants.
- Evacuate the area if necessary.
- Report the nature of the spill—the substance leaking, location, size of the spill or leak, and the rate of flow.
- Try to contain the spill if it is possible to do so without endangering your own health or safety.

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- Remind anyone exposed to a toxic chemical to have a medical exam as soon as possible after the exposure.
- Don't take contaminated clothing or property from the area of the spill.

5. Following proper safety precautions can prevent many spills and accidents:

- Know the identity and properties of any chemical that you work with—read the SDS before you use the chemical for the first time.
- Always keep your work and storage areas clean and neat.
- Store chemicals in unbreakable containers.
- Follow safe storage and handling rules.
- Dispose of waste materials promptly and properly.

6. Be prepared to handle a minor spill.

- Always wear the proper PPE when working with chemicals.
- Keep appropriate cleanup materials on hand for minor spills:
 - Appropriate absorption materials; *and*
 - Neutralizing materials for acids, caustics, or solvents.
- Have proper cleanup tools available.
- Have proper disposal containers in the work area.
- Label any disposal containers used for cleanup operations.

DISCUSSION POINTS:



Review the chemicals being used in your operations and any special rules that may apply. Concentrate on any especially hazardous substances where even a small spill could create a condition that was immediately dangerous to life and health and would require a specially trained hazardous materials (hazmat) crew.

CONCLUSION:



It is far better to prevent a spill than it is to have to clean it up. Many spills can be avoided if proper safety precautions are always followed.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:



Have your employees take the Chemical Spill Procedures quiz. Decide for yourself whether they understand their roles in case of a spill—when they would be responsible for cleanup and when they should call for a special cleanup team or emergency personnel. This will help you decide whether they should review this important subject again soon.



CHEMICAL SPILL PROCEDURES QUIZ

1. **Supervisors may authorize workers to clean up minor spills if:**
 - a. They know the identity of the chemical.
 - b. The safety data sheet (SDS) indicates only minor hazards.
 - c. They are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - d. All of the above.
2. **The spill of an unknown chemical or a mixture of chemicals requires a specially trained cleanup crew.**
 - a. True b. False
3. **A spill in a public area or that could spread to other areas is usually considered a major spill.**
 - a. True b. False
4. **The spill of a known material that the SDS shows to be highly toxic, highly corrosive, flammable, reactive, or radioactive is considered a major spill.**
 - a. True b. False
5. **In case of a major spill, you should immediately warn your supervisor and area occupants and evacuate the area if necessary.**
 - a. True b. False
6. **You don't need a medical exam if you have been exposed to a toxic chemical unless you have symptoms of exposure.**
 - a. True b. False
7. **Accidents are bound to happen—there is nothing you can do to prevent them.**
 - a. True b. False
8. **You should always read the SDS before you use any chemical.**
 - a. True b. False
9. **You don't need to bother with PPE for a minor spill.**
 - a. True b. False
10. **Having proper cleanup materials, tools, and disposal containers on hand is an important part of being prepared for a minor spill.**
 - a. True b. False

When you have completed this quiz, turn it in to your supervisor.

Name: _____

Date: _____



ANSWERS TO CHEMICAL SPILL PROCEDURES QUIZ

1. d. All of the above.
2. a. True.
3. a. True.
4. a. True.
5. a. True.
6. b. False. You do need a medical exam if you have been exposed to a toxic chemical even if you have no symptoms of exposure.
7. b. False. Following proper safety precautions can prevent many spills and accidents.
8. a. True.
9. b. False. Always wear PPE when working with chemicals, even if you are just cleaning up a minor spill.
10. a. True.