

HOME CHEMICAL SAFETY

A. How You May Be Exposed To A Chemical

- You may be exposed to a chemical in three ways
 1. Breathing the chemical
 2. Swallowing contaminated food, water or medication
 3. Touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or things which have touched the chemical.
- Remember, you may be exposed to chemicals even though you may not be able to see or smell anything unusual.

B. Chemical Accidents Can Be Prevented

Many people think of chemicals as only those substances used in manufacturing processes. But chemicals are found everywhere - in our kitchens, medicine cabinets, basements and garages. In fact, most chemical accidents occur in our own homes. And they can be prevented.

Children and Poisoning



The most common home chemical emergencies involve small children eating medicines. Experts in the field of chemical manufacturing suggest taking hazardous materials out of sight could eliminate up to 75% of a poisoning of small children.

Keep all medicines, cosmetics, cleaning products and other household chemicals out of sight and out of reach of children. If your child should eat or drink a non-food substance, find any containers immediately and take them to the phone. Call 9-1-1, if you have it in your area, or call the operator giving us information. Follow their instructions carefully. Often the first aid advice found on containers may not be appropriate. So, do not give anything by mouth until you have been advised by medical professionals.

Home Product Precautions

Other home accidents can result from trying to improve the way a product works by adding one substance to another, not following directions for use of a product or by improper storage or disposal of a chemical.

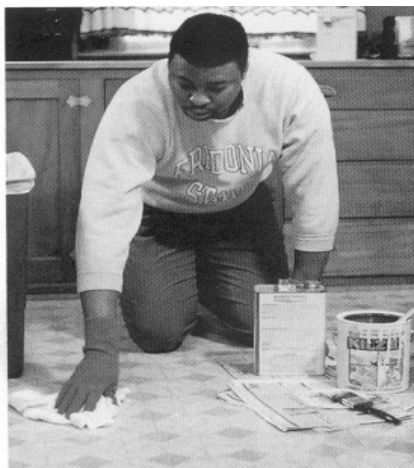
The first precaution you can take is to avoid mixing common household chemical products. Some combinations of these products, such as ammonia and bleach, can create toxic gases.

A second important precaution is to always read the directions before using a new product. Some products should not be used in a small confined space to avoid inhaling dangerous vapors. Other products should not be used without gloves and eye protection to help prevent the chemical from touching your body. Read and follow the directions.

Another effective way to protect yourself and your family is to store chemical products properly. Non-food products should be stored tightly closed in their original container so you can always identify the contents of each container and how to properly use the product.

Never smoke while using household chemicals. Don't use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products or pesticides near the open flame of an appliance, pilot light, lighted candle, fireplace, wood burning stove, etc. Although you may not be able to see or smell them, vapor particles in the air could catch fire or explode

Spill Clean Up



If you should spill a chemical, clean it up immediately with some rags, being careful to protect your eyes and skin, by putting on gloves and eye protection. Allow the fumes in the rags to evaporate outdoors in a safe place, then dispose of them by wrapping them in a newspaper and then placing them in a sealed plastic bag. Dispose of these materials with your trash. If you don't already have one, buy a fire extinguisher that is labeled for A, B, and C class fires and keep it handy.

Buy only as much of a chemical as you think you will use. If you have product left over, try to give it to someone who will use it. Take care to dispose of it properly. Improper disposal can result in harm to yourself or members of your family, accidentally contaminate our local water supply or harm other people.

It is also important to dispose of products properly to preserve our environment and protect wildlife. Plus, some products can be recycled and further protect our environment.

Place like chemicals together and place any flammable chemicals in a metal storage locker outside your home.

Many household chemicals can be taken to your local household hazardous waste collection facility. Many facilities accept pesticides, fertilizers, household cleaners, oil based paints, drain and pool cleaners, antifreeze and brake fluid. If you have questions about how to dispose of a chemical, call the facility or the environmental or recycling agency to learn the proper method of disposal.

Major Chemical Emergencies

A major chemical emergency is an accident which releases a hazardous amount of a chemical into the environment. Accidents can happen underground, on railroad tracks or highways and at manufacturing plants. These accidents sometimes result in a fire or explosion, but many times you can not see or smell anything unusual.

How You May Be Notified of a Major Chemical Emergency

In the event of a major chemical emergency, you will be notified by the authorities. To get your attention, a siren could sound, you may be called by telephone, or emergency personnel may drive by and give instructions over a loud-speaker. Officials could even come to your door.

Listen carefully to radio or television emergency broadcast stations (EBS), and strictly follow instructions. Your life could depend on it.

YOU WILL BE TOLD:

- The type of health hazard
- The area affected
- How to protect yourself
- Evacuation routes (if necessary)
- Shelter locations
- Type and location of medical facilities
- And the phone numbers to call if you need extra help.

Do not call the telephone company, and do not call 9-1-1, or the operator for information. Dial these numbers only for a possible life threatening emergency.

Shelter in Place

One of the basic instructions you may be given in a chemical emergency is to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you and your family safe while remaining in your home. If you are told to shelter-in-place, take your children and pets indoors immediately.

While gathering your family, you can provide a minimal amount of protection to your breathing by covering your mouth and nose with a damp cloth.

- Close all windows in your home
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems
- Close the fireplace damper
- Go to an above ground room (not the basement) with the fewest windows and doors.
- Take your family Disaster Supplies Kit with you
- Wet some towels and jam them in the crack under the doors.
- Tape around doors, windows, exhaust fans or vents. Use the plastic garbage bags to cover windows, outlets and heat registers.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains. To avoid injury, stay away from the windows.
- Stay in the room and listen to your radio until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate

Evacuation



Authorities may decide to evacuate an area for your protection. Again, it is important to stay calm, listen carefully and follow all instructions.

If you are told to evacuate, listen to your radio to make sure the evacuation order applies to you and to understand if you are to evacuate immediately or if you have time to pack some essentials. Do not use your telephone.

If you are told to evacuate immediately.-

- Take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit and medications
- Close and lock your windows Shut off all vents
- Lock the door
- Move quickly and calmly

If the authorities tell you to evacuate because of possible chemical emergency, take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit and pack:

- A change of clothing for each member of the family
- Medication, eyeglasses, hearing aids or dentures, or things like canes and walkers
- Personal items such as toothbrushes, deodorant, etc. items for your baby such as diapers, formula or baby food
- Books, puzzles or cards and games for entertainment.

Do not assume that a shelter will have everything you need. In most cases the shelters will provide only emergency items such as meals, cots and blankets. You don't need to turn off your refrigerator or freezer, but you should turn off all other appliances and lights before locking your home. Check on neighbors to make sure they have been notified, and offer help to those with special needs. If you need a ride, ask a neighbor, If no neighbor is available to help you, listen to the emergency broadcast station for further instructions.

- Take only one car to the evacuation site
- Close your car windows and air vents and turn off the heater or air conditioner.
- Don't take shortcuts because a shortcut may put you in the path of danger.
- For your safety, follow the exact route you are told to take.

Emergency Procedures for School Children

In an emergency, your children may be sheltered in place or evacuated from school. If protective actions are being taken at your children's school, do not go to the school. School personnel are trained to handle emergencies.

Do not call your child's school. You could tie up a phone that is needed for emergency communications.

For further information listen to local emergency radio and TV stations to learn when and where you can pick up your children.

Chemical Poisoning

There are several symptoms of chemical poisoning whether by swallowing, touching, or breathing

- Difficulty breathing
- Changes in skin color
- Headache or blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Irritated eyes, skin, throat
- Unusual behavior.
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Stomach cramps or diarrhea

If you think you have been exposed to a toxic chemical, call 9-1-1, operator. If you see or smell something which you drank may be dangerous, or find someone who has been overcome with toxic vapors, your first job is to make sure that you don't become a victim. If you remain in a dangerous area and become injured or unconscious, you can not help yourself or any victims.

Because chemical poisoning can be a life threatening emergency:

1. Send someone to call 9-1-1
2. Tell the operator the location of the emergency and the phone number from where you are calling.
3. Describe what has happened, how many people are involved and what is being done to help.
4. Stay on the phone until the operator tell you to hang up.

Care of Burns



A chemical burn can be minor or life-threatening, but proper treatment can reduce the chance of infection and the damage caused by contact with the chemical.

Remove any affected clothing or jewelry from the injury. Use lots of cool running water to flush the chemical from the skin until emergency help arrives. The running water will dilute the chemical fast enough to prevent the injury from getting worse. Flush for at least 15 min.

Use the same treatment for eye burns and remove any contact lenses. Be careful to flush the eye from the nose outward. If no large amount of clean water is available, gently brush the chemical off the skin and away from the victim and you. If the chemical is on the face, neck or shoulders, ask the victim to close his or her eyes before brushing off the chemical.

Cover the wound very loosely with a dry, sterile or clean cloth so that the cloth will not stick to the wound. Do not put any medication on the wound. Seek medical attention immediately.

If you believe you have been contaminated with a chemical, call 9-1-1, operator immediately. If medical help is not immediately available, remove your clothing starting from the top and working your way down to your socks. Use care not to touch your contaminated clothing to your bare skin. Place your clothing in a plastic bag so it cannot contaminate other people or things. Take a thorough shower to wash any chemical away. Re-dress in clean clothing and go for medical help at your first opportunity.

Important Points To Remember:

1. Chemicals are everywhere. They are an important part of life
2. The most common chemical accidents occur in our own homes and they can be prevented.
3. The best ways to avoid chemical accidents are to read and follow the directions for use, storage and disposal of the product.
4. Don't mix products, especially household cleaning products.
5. Develop a family Disaster Plan and pack a Family Disaster Supplies Kit.
6. In the event of an emergency, follow the instructions of the authorities carefully. Listen to your emergency broadcast stations on radio and TV.
7. Use your phone only in life threatening emergencies, and then call 9-1-1, or the operator immediately.
8. If you are told to shelter-in-place, go inside, close all windows and vents and turn off all fans, heating or cooling systems. Take family members and pets to a safe room, seal windows and doors, and listen to emergency broadcast stations for instructions.
9. If you are told to evacuate immediately, take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit. Pack only the bare essentials, such as medications, and leave your home quickly. Follow the traffic route authorities recommend. Don't take short cuts on the way to the shelter.
10. If you find someone who appears to have been injured from chemical exposure, make sure you are not in danger before administering first aid.
11. And lastly, remember, the best way to protect yourself and your family is to be prepared.

Minimize Chemical hazards in the home

1. Read labels
2. Check expiration dates on all medicine prescribed or over the counter.
3. Don't buy more than you need
4. Store them properly (remember the **L.I.E.S. rules** --- **Limit, Isolate, Eliminate, Separate**).
5. Child proof all storage areas for chemicals and medicines
6. Earthquake proof storage for any chemicals