

Chemical Storage

Many different tasks at your worksite may require the use of chemicals. Equally as important as their proper usage is their proper storage and maintenance. Improper storage can lead to bodily harm, explosions or fires. It is important that you follow the basic guidelines and procedures for storing chemicals in order to avoid any accident or injury.

Each chemical in the storage space should have a proper label detailing its contents. While it is advisable to keep chemicals in their original containers, if you must transfer them (say, to a smaller container) be absolutely certain that you provide a label for the other container as well. As required by law, the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical should also be on-hand. It provides reference information for chemical, as well as information what to do in the event of a spill or other exposure. From the information provided you can make better decisions as to how to store the chemicals as well.

Chemicals should be stored in well-ventilated areas, free from extreme temperatures or other potential sources of heat. If storing chemicals on shelving, make sure it can hold the weight of the chemicals and that it has an anti-roll lip to ensure nothing rolls off the edge. Never under any condition store chemicals above eye-level; a spill could cause serious burns or even blindness. Also, never store chemicals along side food, either in the refrigerator or in cabinets.

As you might have learned in science class, certain chemicals mixed together can cause fires or explosions. Make sure you have read the MSDS information about each chemical, and ensure that incompatible substances are stored apart. For example, keep acids away from bases, oxides away from flammables and so on. Information on the compatibility of substances is found on both the label as well as the MSDS. In addition to their proper storage, periodically check for any unwanted, expired, corroded damaged containers. Dispose of them properly accordingly.

Chemical accidents can be prevented with proper information, usage and storage. Take the time to research each of the chemicals you are using to ensure that you are not creating a potentially hazardous worksite.