

Hazardous Materials: Be Smart, Be Safe

HAZARDS AT HOME:

Hazardous materials aren't just found at the workplace — they can be in your home, too. Cleaners, art supplies, medicines, gasoline, motor oil — these can all cause injury if used, stored or disposed of incorrectly. Follow safe practices for handling hazardous materials at home just as you do at work, and keep all dangerous substances out of the reach of children.

Watch Out for Hidden Hazards

Even if you don't work with regulated hazardous materials, many common substances, such as cleaners, paint, solvents and even printer toner, can cause skin irritation, lung injury or other problems. Keep these safety tips in mind:

- Don't eat or drink around chemicals.
- Take note of unusual dusts, fumes, vapors or odors — they could signal the presence of a possibly harmful substance.
- Keep the workplace clean, and return cleaners and other materials to storage after using them.
- Properly clean up any spills of potentially hazardous materials immediately.
- Store all chemical products in their original covered containers with labels and warnings clearly visible.
- Wash your hands and clothes after handling any chemical products.
- Use materials that produce dust or fumes only in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep the Poison Control Center number and other emergency numbers posted by the telephone.



... with water and baking soda, discard ... with water, rinse container, dispenser tube ... and discard all components.

... AND ELECTROLYTE ... BEFORE FILLING ... IN MANUAL AND ...



Stay Safe: Don't Smoke

Smoking around many hazardous materials is dangerous. It can cause fire, explosion or the release of harmful fumes. Also, if you work around lung irritants and you are a smoker, your lungs are more vulnerable to injury and irritation ... one more reason to quit.

What to Do in Case of an Accident

In the event of personal contamination or injury involving a hazardous material, follow these general steps:

- 1. Contain the substance.** If a work area is contaminated by a hazardous substance, regulated safety procedures must be followed. First steps may include sealing off the area, alerting other employees, evacuating the workplace and cleaning up the area.
- 2. Alert supervisors.** Even in the event of a minor accident or injury, be sure to tell a supervisor so that the incident can be reported, logged and handled safely.
- 3. Treat injuries.** How injuries are treated depends on the substance at fault. In fact, in some cases it is best to avoid helping an injured person until the hazardous material has been identified. Emergency procedures may include flushing an injury with water, performing artificial respiration in the case of a lung injury or calling Poison Control. Be sure you are educated about first-aid and emergency procedures that pertain to your line of work and the materials you handle.

What Is an MSDS?

A Material Safety Data Sheet, or MSDS, is available for all hazardous chemicals such as cleaners, art supplies, medicines and gasoline. An MSDS provides the following information:

- What the substance is and its components
- First-aid procedures and hazard warnings
- Regulations concerning the chemical
- How to store the chemical
- How to use the chemical
- How to dispose of the chemical
- How flammable, unstable or toxic the chemical is

Be safe: Read the MSDS for any substances you work with and know how to interpret the information on an MSDS. These sheets should be made available by your employer and can also be accessed on the Internet.

Delayed Reaction:

It may take days, weeks, even years for exposure to a hazardous material to take full effect. **The bottom line:** Absence of symptoms does not mean that hazardous materials are not harming you. Wear protective equipment and follow safety regulations every time.

HAZMAT WORK: What You Should Know

There are strict regulations for handling, transporting and removing hazardous materials that help keep you, your co-workers and the environment clean and safe. Keep these guidelines in mind for "hazmat" work:

- **EDUCATE** yourself. Hazmat work is regulated by the Department of Transportation's Office of Hazardous Materials Safety in the United States and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System in Canada. These organizations provide information on specific materials and how they should be handled — get familiar with the regulations and rules that affect your work.

- **SUPPORT** each other. Successful hazmat work requires teamwork. Accidents and injuries are least likely when co-workers and supervisors team up to ensure that safety regulations are followed, protective equipment is used correctly, and periodic checks and training are performed.

- **SHARPEN** your skills. Seek out opportunities to learn the latest methods and innovations in the hazmat field. Refresh your knowledge of safety and emergency procedures periodically to be sure you're up-to-date.

