

Household Chemical Emergencies

Although the risk of a chemical accident is slight, knowing how to handle household products containing hazardous materials or chemicals can reduce the risk of injury.

Before a Household Chemical Emergency

It is critical to store household chemicals in places where children cannot access them. Remember that products such as aerosol cans of hair spray and deodorant, nail polish and nail polish remover, toilet bowl cleaners and furniture polishes all fall into the category of hazardous materials.

Hazardous household chemicals may include:

- Cleaning products
- Pesticides
- Automotive products like antifreeze or motor oil
- Miscellaneous items like batteries, mercury thermometers and florescent light bulbs
- Flammable products like kerosene, home heating oil, propane tanks and lighter fluid
- Workshop or painting supplies such as paint thinners and turpentine
- Lawn and garden products like herbicides and insecticides

The following are guidelines for buying and storing hazardous household chemicals safely:

- Keep products containing hazardous materials in their original containers and never remove the labels unless the container is corroding. Corroding containers should be repackaged and clearly labeled.
- Never store hazardous products in food containers.
- Never mix household hazardous chemicals or waste with other products. Incompatibles, such as chlorine bleach and ammonia, may react, ignite or explode.

- Never use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products, or pesticides near an open flame
- Clean up any chemical spill immediately. Allow the fumes in the rags to evaporate outdoors, then dispose of the rags by wrapping them in a newspaper and placing them in a sealed plastic bag in your trash can.
- Dispose of hazardous materials correctly.
- Save the national poison control number in your cell phone and post it next to landlines in your home (800) 222-1222.

During a Household Chemical Emergency

Get out of the residence immediately if there is a danger of fire or explosion.

- Stay upwind and away from the residence to avoid breathing toxic fumes.
- Recognize and respond to symptoms of toxic poisoning including:
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract
 - Changes in skin color
 - Headache or blurred vision
 - Dizziness, clumsiness or lack of coordination
 - Cramps or diarrhea
- If someone is experiencing toxic poisoning symptoms or has been exposed to a household chemical, call the national poison control center at 1 (800) 222-1222 and find any containers of the substance that are readily available in order to provide requested information.
- Follow the emergency operator or dispatcher's first aid instructions carefully. The first aid advice found on containers may be out of date or inappropriate. Do not give anything by mouth unless advised to do so by a medical professional.

After a Household Chemical Emergency

Discard clothing that may have been contaminated. Some chemicals may not wash out completely.