

Hazardous Material Disposal Meeting Kit



What's At Stake

Many businesses generate wastes that are considered hazardous or harmful to human health or the environment because they are flammable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic. Due to the harmful potential of hazardous materials, workers must remain aware of the safety hazards and proper handling and disposal procedures in order to protect the environment, themselves, and comply with state and federal regulations.

What's the Danger

FIRST STEPS TO SAFELY HANDLE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

- First investigate whether or not processes using hazardous materials can be eliminated; or determine if alternative methods exist for processes that do not use hazardous materials.
- Attempt to reduce the quantity, toxicity or other hazardous characteristic of materials being generated from processes that cannot be eliminated or substituted for by an environmentally safe process.
- Evaluate hazardous materials characteristics to ensure that incompatible materials are not combined or stored near one another.
- Do not dispose hazardous materials to the sanitary sewer system, atmosphere (i.e., evaporation), or solid trash receptacles.
- Insure that proper containers are available to accumulate each waste stream in advance of actually conducting research, analyzing samples or starting a chemical process.
- Properly label containers with words that accurately identify each container's contents.
- Keep track of accumulations to the container (all constituents and their concentrations). A log book with entries referenced to unique container numbers is helpful.
- Containers must always be kept closed between accumulations.
- Minimize the accumulation of hazardous materials in your area by submitting materials and full containers promptly to EHS for disposal. Never accumulate more than 55 gallons of hazardous materials or one (1) liter of acute hazardous waste in a given area.
- Submit all chemicals and hazardous materials to EHS for final characterization, collection, and proper disposal.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

UNACCEPTABLE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

There are several management practices that are NOT acceptable under EPA and state DEQ regulations.

Disposal – The disposal of hazardous wastes to the sanitary sewer system, a solid waste receptacle, or directly to the environment (including evaporation) is illegal. EPA regulations require that generators determine (either by knowledge or through chemical analysis) whether or not a material is a hazardous waste before it is discarded.

Transport – Do not deliver discarded hazardous materials to the EHS office, either in person or via mail. Delivery of discarded hazardous materials to the Hazardous Materials Storage Building (HMSB) is also not authorized. These materials will be returned to the individual and will not be accepted for collection until proper protocols have been followed.

Treatment – Treating hazardous waste to reduce its toxicity or make it less reactive without an EPA permit and/or a “waste analysis plan” is a violation of EPA regulations.

Waste Stream Dilution/Evaporation – The dilution or evaporation of hazardous waste to “lessen” its toxicity is not permitted by the EPA. Hazardous wastes containing characteristic waste constituents above TCLP regulatory levels cannot be diluted or evaporated down to below regulatory levels and disposed of to the sanitary sewer system. (e.g., a 2 mg/L mercury solution cannot be diluted to below 0.2 mg/L and discarded to the sewer system for disposal. Also, a material containing benzene CANNOT be allowed to evaporate in order to achieve benzene concentrations below regulatory levels).

Storage – Storing more than 55 gallons of hazardous waste and/or one kilogram of acute hazardous waste (P-listed waste) in a given storage area is not allowed. Hazardous materials must be stored in a physically sound and chemically compatible container with its closure on at all times between accumulations and during storage.

BEST PRACTICES FOR HANDLING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFELY

Label Hazardous Waste Containers Properly

All hazardous materials must be properly labeled and stored in the right container. If something isn't stored properly, it could leak out or corrode the containers. Proper labeling, as well as abiding by those labels, ensures employees always know what they're handling.

Make sure workers clean up the work area as soon as they are finished using a substance.

Ensure Safe Storage of Hazardous Materials

Safe storage of hazardous waste comes down to clear communication between management and staff. By creating an action plan, the initial storage of materials can be correctly labeled and stay in line with regulatory policies. The intended purpose of regulatory policies is to maintain a safe place of work for your employees.

Be sure that all hazardous materials can be safely stored in a ventilated dry area away from others. All employees should be able to maintain their own clean work surface away from hazardous waste.

Train And Train More Workers

Must train them in safe handling of hazardous materials. Established protocols are a good starting point, but you must also plan ahead for the unexpected. Train employees in emergency procedures, including what to do in a variety of emergency types involving hazardous materials including medical emergencies.

Make training a priority at your place of work when it comes to the safe handling of materials. More importantly, revisit training annually so that staff always know what to do to stay safe.

Carefully Manage Storage Areas

Best practices for storage areas recommend a dry, cool storage area with adequate ventilation. It's important to keep lids on containers at all times, label hazardous waste as such, and keep all materials properly stored.

Review how hazardous materials are stored, used, and handled at your organization and make any changes needed in line with safe materials handling. Review the issue periodically to make sure staff members are keeping up with regulations. Regular check-ins can prevent recurring problems with hazardous waste storage.

FINAL WORD

Workers that generate or handle hazardous waste require training on the hazards and safe, proper handling of these materials. Training should cover the procedures for collection, labeling, and storage of the hazardous waste before it is transported for final disposal or treatment.