

# Safe Materials Storage – Landscaping Meeting Kit



## WHAT'S AT STAKE

In the landscaping industry, workers handle a wide range of materials, including soil, mulch, stones, chemicals, tools, and equipment. Improper storage of these materials can lead to accidents, injuries, and environmental damage.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

The dangers associated with improper materials storage in landscaping are significant and varied.

### Specific Risks:

#### 1. Tripping and Falling Hazards

- **Obstructed Walkways:** Materials like hoses, tools, bags of soil, or piles of debris left in walkways can create tripping hazards, leading to falls and injuries.
- **Unstable Stacks:** Stacks of materials like bricks, stones, or bags of mulch that are not properly secured can collapse, causing injuries to workers or damage to equipment.

#### 1. Chemical Hazards

- **Improper Storage:** Chemicals such as pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides must be stored properly to prevent leaks, spills, or contamination.
- **Incompatible Chemicals:** Storing incompatible chemicals together can result in dangerous reactions, including fires, explosions, or the release of toxic gases.

#### 1. Heavy Loads

- **Manual Handling Injuries:** Improperly stored heavy materials, such as bags of soil, stones, or equipment, can lead to strains, sprains, and other musculoskeletal injuries.
- **Falling Objects:** Materials that are not securely stored can fall from heights.

#### 1. Environmental Damage

- **Soil and Water Contamination:** Leaks or spills from improperly stored chemicals can contaminate soil.
- **Wildlife Harm:** Chemicals that leach harm wildlife and disrupt ecosystems.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

How to ensure safe storage on the job site.

## General Storage Practices

### 1. Organized Storage Areas

- **Designated Areas:** Set up designated storage areas for different types of materials, such as chemicals, tools, and bulk materials like soil or mulch.
- **Clear Walkways:** Ensure that all walkways are kept clear of materials and debris.

### 1. Stable Stacking

- **Proper Stacking Techniques:** Stack materials like bricks, stones, or bags of soil securely. Use pallets, shelves, or other supports to keep stacks stable and off the ground.
- **Weight Distribution:** Heavier items should be placed on the bottom, with lighter items on top.

### 1. Safe Lifting and Handling

- **Manual Handling:** Lift with your legs, not your back, and avoid twisting while lifting.
- **Mechanical Assistance:** Use forklifts, dollies, or other equipment to move heavy or bulky materials.

## Chemical Storage

### 1. Proper Storage of Chemicals

- **Labeling and Identification:** Ensure that all chemicals are properly labeled with their contents and hazards.
- **Safe Containers:** Use containers that are designed to store specific chemicals, ensuring that they are sealed and free from leaks. Avoid storing chemicals in makeshift or damaged containers.

### 1. Separation of Incompatible Chemicals

- **Segregated Storage:** Store incompatible chemicals separately to prevent dangerous reactions.
- **Ventilation:** Ensure that storage areas for chemicals are well-ventilated.

### 1. Spill Prevention and Response

- **Spill Containment:** Use spill containment measures, such as secondary containment trays or drip pans, to catch leaks or spills from chemical containers.
- **Emergency Response:** Have spill kits and emergency procedures in place to respond to chemical spills.

## Tool and Equipment Storage:

### 1. Proper Tool Storage

- **Secure Storage:** Keep sharp tools, such as saws or pruners, stored safely to prevent accidental cuts.
- **Maintenance and Inspection:** Regularly inspect tools and equipment for wear or damage.

### 1. Equipment Storage

- **Protect from the Elements:** Store equipment like lawnmowers, trimmers, and other machinery in covered areas to protect them from the weather.
- **Fuel Storage:** Store fuel for equipment in approved containers, away from ignition sources.

## **Training and Awareness**

### **1. Training on Safe Storage Practices:**

- **Comprehensive Training:** Provide training for all workers on safe materials storage practices.
- **Refresher Courses:** Conduct regular refresher courses to reinforce safe storage practices.

### **1. Promote a Culture of Safety**

- **Lead by Example:** Supervisors and experienced workers should model safe storage practices.

## **FINAL WORD**

Safe materials storage in landscaping is crucial for preventing accidents, protecting the environment, and ensuring a productive work environment.