Spill Prevention and Response Fatality File



EMPLOYEE SUSTAINS INHALATION INJURY AFTER CHEMICAL SPILL

On November 7, Employee #1, an EH&S technician was making rounds collecting chemical waste from various research laboratory locations, when a 4-liter bottle containing waste HPLC effluent (50 aqueous acetonitrile with 0.01 trifluoroacetic acid) fell from a cart. The bottle fractured, and its contents spilled. Employee #1 cleaned up the spill using PPE to avoid skin contact but failed to put on a respirator. Approximately three hours later, he complained of an irritated throat and was sent to a hospital, where he was admitted for observation. Approximately 82 hours after initial exposure, Employee #1 returned to an emergency room to seek treatment for difficulty breathing, which he believed was incident related. Employee #1 failed to follow the protocol of calling the facility Emergency Response Team as outlined for spill response in the Hazardous Material Management Program for the type and quantity of material.