

# Chemical Safety Training

## Correct Usage – Storage - Disposal

When choosing commercial grade cleaning chemicals safety is a critical factor. Your choice should be to purchase non hazardous cleaning chemicals as they are safe to use and will minimise impact on the environment.

Chemical safety does relate to the effects of cleaning products when being used, by cleaners or other workers. Many chemicals are safer now than in the past but it is important to remember chemicals have the potential to leak and be improperly mixed, creating fume and fire hazards. Many chemical suppliers can install dispensing systems which reduces potential risks.

If you are responsible for the management of or have employees performing cleaning tasks in your business it is important that the chemicals you use are safe to use, are stored and disposed of correctly to ensure all occupational health safety and welfare and environmental legal requirements are met. Training is the key with appropriate supervision and enforcement through internal inspections to ensure safety standards are met.

## Education and Training

From day one when an employee starts with your organisation, they should receive at Induction, a strong safety message which covers chemical handling and personal protective equipment training, and how to read a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

After you have trained your staff put some checks in place to see if they understand what a MSDS sheet is and how to read it, before they perform cleaning duties. Most staff appreciate practising what they have learnt. It may be necessary for them to repeat many times.

As a Manager, it is important inspections are done to ensure all MSDS are in proper locations.

## Storage

Labelling plays a big part with chemical safety, as it ensures that chemicals are not mistakenly being used for the wrong purpose or application. Using an incorrect chemical can damage a surface finish, and cause other problems if incorrectly used in conjunction with other chemicals.

Labels for bottles of diluted solution are provided by manufacturers. Speak to your chemical supplier about removing any spray bottle or container that is not labelled. It is critical that your cleaners understand correct storage and disposal techniques to ensure hazards in a cleaners rooms are minimised and to ensure they abide by occupational health safety and welfare law.



# Chemical Safety Training cont.

## Storage (continued)

For your business, it is important that chemicals are stored correctly in the cleaner's rooms to ensure a safe working environment for your cleaners and others in the workplace. Everything should be stored on shelves with chemicals no higher than eye level so that labels can be easily read and the danger of bottles and containers falling on a cleaner is minimised. Containers should be tightly closed and free of damage such as holes or tears.

Problems do happen so anticipate them. You want to make sure that if a container leaks, that you contain the leak. Cleaner's rooms need to be well lit and ventilated to minimise any safety risk.

## Disposal

Disposing of chemicals and associated packaging is the final safety step that cannot be overlooked.

Environmental and OHS&W laws must be adhered to when disposing of chemical containers. The MSDS should provide disposal instructions. Your chemical supplier should remove any out of date chemical or chemical container or packaging for you.

Though cleaning chemicals have become safer for people and for the environment, cleaners should remain vigilant about chemical storage and disposal, as safety issues don't become less relevant even if the products have improved

