



ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH & SAFETY

Hazardous Material Spill Cleanup

Document location: www.fgcu.edu/EHS/HazardousMaterialsManagement.html

In Case of a Chemical Spill:

Laboratory and shop workers are expected to have the knowledge, capabilities, and supplies to clean up incidental spills of commonly-used substances. Workers should be familiar with the material's hazardous characteristics, proper clean-up procedures, and other potential hazards in the work area.

Large Spills:

If you are unable to deal with a spill in your area, contact University Police at ext.1900 from a campus phone. Inform them of the exact situation, chemicals and quantities involved, and the location. University Police will notify the San Carlos Park Fire Department for assistance. University Police will also contact the Director of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) or designee.

Spills and releases of certain chemicals in excess of their Reportable Quantities (RQ) require immediate notification of the National Response Center and the State Warning Point. The Director of EH&S or designee can help to determine if RQ's have been exceeded and make appropriate notifications.

Make every attempt to block the substance from entering any drains, water systems, or natural areas, and evacuate and secure or cordon off the area.

As with any major event, notify Ms. Susan Evans, with the President's Office, at 590-1057.

When A Spill Occurs:

1. Communicate the situation to others in the lab, and Supervision (PI, Dept. Chair); remove all unprotected personnel and students away from the area of the spill; ask for help, if needed. Notify EH&S at 590-1414.
 - Protect human life first, then facilities.
 - If the spilled chemical is volatile, ventilate the area or evacuate.
 - If the spilled chemical is flammable, remove all ignition sources.
2. Evaluate the risks:
 - a. How likely is a fire or explosion?
 - b. Can toxic fumes or particles be released?
 - c. Is the substance highly corrosive, or an oxidizer?

- d. Can the substance cause damage to the building, equipment, or to the environment if it goes down a drain?
3. Evaluate quantities:
- a. Do you have the materials and protective equipment readily at hand to clean-up the amount of material spilled?
 - b. Do you have the knowledge and training? A prompt response can minimize potential hazards, or if handled incorrectly, create new ones.
 - c. Don protective equipment: lab coat, gloves, and especially eye protection.
 - d. If vapors or dusts are present – close the door and turn on the hood. Temporarily vacate the area if possible, and resume clean-up later.
 - e. Most acids or bases can be neutralized in place, then mopped or rinsed to drain. Neutralize acids with sodium carbonate or bicarbonate. Neutralize bases with citric or ascorbic acid. Confirm neutralization is complete with pH paper before rinsing.
 - f. Contain the spill – surround it with sand, vermiculite, cat litter, or spill pillows. Use paper towels as a last resort.
 - g. Absorb the liquid – add more vermiculite or other absorbent.
 - h. Collect the material by scooping or sweeping into a bucket or other container that can be sealed. Label properly and call EH&S for collection of all hazardous wastes.
 - i. Ventilate the area as needed.
 - j. Decontaminate the area: common cleaning products should be adequate.

In Case of a Biological Spill:

All departments that work with blood or other potentially infectious materials must have an appropriate spill kit or materials available at all times. The spill kit contents should include disinfectant such as 10% bleach, PPE, dust pan and forceps for picking up contaminated sharps, paper towels and biohazard bags.

Employees should adhere to the following procedures when dealing with spills of potentially infectious materials.

- Isolate the area and warn others nearby.
- Notify the supervisor.
- Do not attempt to clean a spill unless appropriately trained and equipped with an adequate spill kit.
- Put on proper PPE and remove glass or sharps with forceps or dust pan.
- Put paper towels on spill and apply disinfectant carefully to avoid splashes.
- Allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to be effective.

- Dispose of spill and clean up materials in accordance with the University's policy on Biomedical Waste.

If a spill or accident results in an exposure incident involving infectious materials, the employee must immediately report the accident to their supervisor and medical provider and follow post exposure procedures.

For any questions, contact EH&S at 590-1414. If at any time during the event you do not feel comfortable – get additional assistance from others in the area.

See also:

Management and Disposal of Hazardous Waste

Management and Disposal of Biohazardous Waste