

## HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL

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.

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. In addition, workers should be trained on emergency procedures and accidental spill response for the materials that they work with.

Hazardous materials should never be disposed of down the drain or in regular trash receptacles. They should be put into proper and compatible containers that can be securely sealed. Compatible container materials ensure that wastes will not react with or corrode them. The containers should not be completely full; a “head space” allows for waste expansion. The sealed containers should be labeled with the name and hazard class of the waste along with the words ‘Hazardous Waste’ and the date it was generated.

Waste containers should be stored in a secure manner and protected from extreme environments. They should be segregated and stored in compatible hazard classes (flammable, corrosive, oxidizers, etc.) to prevent hazardous reactions if the wastes combine. The containers should remain closed during storage, except when adding or removing waste.

Proper handling and storage of waste containers can prevent ruptures, overturns, or other failures. They should not be stacked or handled in a manner that could cause them to fail. Some flammable material containers may require grounding and containers should be seismically secured, if possible, to prevent spills in an earthquake. Waste storage time limits vary depending on the facility or material; workers should be familiar with the requirements for their worksite and wastes.

Storage areas for hazardous wastes should be inspected at least weekly. Secondary containment can prevent spills, but if a leak or spill occurs, workers should follow

facility spill and emergency response procedures. Spill kits should be available for such emergencies; all cleanup materials should be handled as hazardous waste.

Proper waste documentation is important to track and maintain accountability for hazardous waste prior to shipment. Workers should be familiar with the documents required for their facility and waste types including EPA Identification numbers issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifests. Workers must receive training before they can sign waste manifest documentation. Transportation of hazardous wastes should be done according to regulation requirements and by dedicated hazardous waste haulers.

Proper training and knowledge can help workers ensure that hazardous wastes are safely and properly handled from “cradle to grave.”

Content Source: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (Users of Safety Talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.)

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