

# SAFETY

## AND THE SUPERVISOR

STRATEGIES & SOLUTIONS FOR THE SAFETY CONSCIOUS ORGANIZATION

# Chemical Safety

## Safety Meeting Presentation

### A Quick Lesson In Chemical Safety

Chemicals in our workplace may range from common items you might also use at home to industrial chemicals you've never heard of.

Whether you are dealing with a simple bathroom cleaner or a highly dangerous industrial solvent, you need to know what you are doing.

This all starts with how the chemicals are stored for use. Making sure we store chemicals safely is important because improper storage can result in explosions, fires or toxic fumes.

### Read The Labels

All of the chemicals we use come with a label detailing specific information about the product.

Chemicals can be toxic, corrosive, flammable or even radioactive. Look on the labels of the products you use in your job. If you find the words "POISON," "DANGER," "WARNING" or "CAUTION," you should read on to learn how to handle and store the substance properly.

The labels should contain a section entitled "Instructions for Safe Handling and Storage." This section will tell you what precautions you need to take when storing the substance.

Certain industrial chemicals have fancier labels than you might find on ordinary household products. These labels will give you even more detailed information about what is inside the container and how to store it properly. Chemicals have different properties, and it is important to know how storing a container in light, high temperatures, humidity and proximity to other substances can affect the safety of the substance.

### Never Mix And Match

Never assume it is OK to transfer a chemical substance from one container to another without doing some intense investigation. This is especially important if a container has previously held some other material. A dangerous reaction could occur if residue from the for-

mer substance still lingers in the container.

Chemicals are shipped and packaged in certain containers for a reason. Some containers are designed specifically for a particular chemical. Placing that chemical into another container could cause serious accidents.

You should never store several chemical containers in close proximity or even in the same room unless you have read the labels and are certain they will not cause an adverse reaction. Discuss any concerns with a supervisor before placing a chemical container where it may not belong.

### Be Aware Of Special Situations

Filling or refilling chemical containers can pose some special hazards. Most chemicals arrive pre-packaged and sealed from the manufacturer, but some allow us to refill them on our own. When refilling, take precautions to ensure there is no spillage or other danger. This can be especially important at work where you may encounter chemicals you don't see very often or know much about.

Don't assume that just because you've always done something a certain way that it is the safe way. For example, do you ever run to the gas station to refill a gas can for your lawnmower? If you do, you could be risking a dangerous explosion. Fires can spontaneously erupt when you try to fill portable gas containers in the back of a pickup truck or in cars with carpeted surfaces. The buildup of static electricity from bed liners or carpet can cause fires or explosions with both metal and plastic gas containers.

Take the time to learn as much as you can about the potentially dangerous substances you use on the job. When you know the safe way to use them and store them, you'll make the workplace safer for all of us.

Thanks for your attention.

Have a safe day.