



*for custodians*

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## KNOW THE CHEMICALS YOU WORK WITH

When you work with chemicals on a daily basis, it is easy to forget just how dangerous these products can be. All chemicals have the potential to cause you harm. Take the time to learn about the chemical products you work with.

- To avoid exposure, learn how to handle and use chemicals safely. Read the label on the container carefully. It will give you important information about the chemical, including first aid advice.
- For more detailed information, read the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) on a particular product. If you do not understand the SDS, ask your supervisor to go over it with you.
- Chemical products should only be used in the manner and for the purpose for which they were intended. Be sure not to mix chemicals unless specifically allowed by the “directions for use”.
- Store chemicals according to the manufacturer's instructions. Chemicals should be in recommended containers, clearly marked and kept in specially designated, well-ventilated storage areas. Incompatible chemicals should be stored away from each other because of chemical reactions they could cause. Certain combinations might cause toxic gases (mixing bleach and ammonia), fires or explosions.
- Remember to keep chemicals out of the reach of children! Lock chemical storage areas.
- Secondary containers into which hazardous chemicals are transferred must be labeled with the identity of the chemical and the appropriate hazard warning(s) that are found on the original product container. Examples of hazard warnings are flammable, corrosive, poison, and irritant.
- Avoid contact with chemicals as much as possible. The use of certain chemicals may require to you wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to guard against exposure. Use the appropriate gloves, a rubber apron, or other protective clothing if prolonged or repeated skin contact may occur. Use safety glasses, goggles, or a face shield when eye and face contact may occur. When in doubt consult the SDS. Wash your hands after using any chemicals.
- Make sure you follow all instructions and safety precautions. When the label states "Use only in a well-ventilated area" be sure to follow that recommendation.
- Know which chemicals are flammable and keep them away from all sources of ignition. This includes matches, electrical circuits, welding operations, sparks from mechanical processes and pilot lights.
- Know the location of and procedures to use eyewash and safety shower stations in case you or someone else is exposed to chemicals. Know what the first aid procedures are for overexposure.

If you know the safety precautions for working with chemicals, you can protect yourself from harm. For further information about safe chemical use, go to your district's [SafeSchools.com](http://SafeSchools.com) website and take the Hazard Communication and Safety Data Sheet courses.