

This Information Sheet provides guidance on the action to take in the event of a chemical spill. It should be read in conjunction with other supporting Information Sheets eg 'Identifying Chemical Hazards' and 'Safe Disposal of Hazardous (Special) Chemical Waste'.

Spilt chemicals are one of the greatest risks in a laboratory environment or chemical store because the normal control measures will no longer be operating. As a consequence both people, the environment and other assets could potentially be at risk.

Before working with any chemicals you must always familiarise yourself with the COSHH Assessment and associated Material Safety Data Sheets. However, this does not just mean how to carry out your experiment but also includes what action to take in an emergency; **Emergency Procedures**. In addition, familiarise yourself with any Local Rules regarding what action to take if a spill occurs and equipment provided in the Lab you are working to support this, eg Spill Kits, First Aider / Emergency Contact details.

In the event a chemical spill does occur you may think you are doing the right thing by clearing it up immediately **BUT REMEMBER:**



- **YOURS AND OTHER PEOPLE'S SAFETY COMES FIRST.**
- **IF IN DOUBT** raise the alarm and evacuate.
- Inform the Laboratory Supervisor / Technician immediately. If they are unavailable call University Security on **2795 / 333 (01248 382795)**.



- If contaminated carefully remove contaminated clothing, with gloves removed last.
- Use the emergency shower if necessary.
- Seek First Aid assistance. If none is available locally contact University Security.

To 'Clean Up' or 'Not to Clean Up'?

Before attempting to clean up spilt chemicals ask yourself:

- Are you confident you know what you are doing or should you seek advice?
- Do you understand the hazards associated with the chemical?
- Are you certain no other hazards will be created by the spill eg reaction with other chemicals producing toxic gases?
- Do you know how to protect yourself against all the hazards?
- Will the area need to be vacated by others during the clean-up, and / or for a period of time after the clean up?
- Is the correct PPE and a suitable clean up 'spill kit' available?
- Do you need help to clean up?

CLEANING UP SPILLS SAFELY

NEVER

- Do not attempt to neutralise concentrated acids or alkalis chemically.
- Do not switch off fume hoods.
- Do not switch 'ON' / 'OFF' electrical equipment if the spill involves flammable liquids.

ALWAYS:

1. Make sure you are wearing appropriate PPE. If none is available don't clean up - but do:
 - Warn others who could be affected.
 - Inform a Laboratory Supervisor / Technician immediately.
2. Protect drains and control spills by using absorbent booms or materials where possible eg:



3. Deactivate the spilt chemicals by absorbing or neutralising appropriately.
4. Leave absorbent material in place **for at least 20 minutes**.



5. Clean up the deactivated chemicals into suitable containers - usually provided with the spill kit.
6. Ensure the container is properly labelled, indicating the name of the chemical and any hazards.
7. Clean the area with water and detergent. Remember to dry the floor and / or place a warning sign.
8. Dispose of all the contaminated material; including PPE correctly ie as hazardous waste and appropriate for the type of chemical involved.