

**Hazardous  
Waste  
Factsheet**

*“Accidental mixing of spilled chemicals may result in violent reactions that can release toxic vapors or start fires.”*

# Hazardous Materials Management for Retailers

## The Problem

Hazardous products such as pesticides, solvents, concrete cleaners, strippers, lye, and fuels can cause retail stores big problems if they arrive in damaged containers or spill in the aisles. All businesses stocking hazardous products should be prepared for a spill. Careful preparation will help avoid injury to workers, customers, and contamination of local soil and water.

**If a spill occurs outside and impacts air, land, or water, immediately contact 911 and the Washington Department of Ecology at (360) 407-6300.**

## Be Prepared

Know the hazardous products you sell and where they are located in the store. Manufacturers of hazardous products are required to supply you with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). These information sheets provide information, such as chemical ingredients, chemicals that should be stored separately, and how to protect yourself in the event of a spill. Many stores can access MSDS through online consulting services or corporate websites.

Make sure MSDS are easy to access in case you ever have to clean up a spill. One option might be to make multiple copies of the MSDS and post them in three-ring binders, located near where corresponding products are stored. A main copy might be kept in an office and a primary spill kit. All MSDS should be kept as current as possible.

## Protect Yourself from Spills

Develop a spill plan for use when responding to spills, and post it near the kit. Make sure all employees know the procedure. One person should be responsible for overseeing clean ups and for training employees. Keep a record of who has received clean-up training and when. Corporate environmental coordinators can often provide additional training materials, including videos. For a fact sheet on writing a spill plan, call (360) 867-2664.

Thurston County Public  
Health and Social Services  
Environmental Health Division

412 Lilly Rd. NE  
Olympia, WA 98506-5132  
Hazardous Waste Hotline:  
360-867-2664

TDD Line: 360-867-2603

[http://www.co.thurston.wa.us.  
health/ehhw/index.html](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us.health/ehhw/index.html)



Businesses stocking hazardous materials should have at least one spill kit on-hand and be familiar with its use. You can buy items or whole kits from several suppliers, such as Lab Safety (800-356-0783; [www.labsafety.com](http://www.labsafety.com)), New Pig (800-458-4647; [www.newpig.com](http://www.newpig.com)), or Grainger ([www.grainger.com](http://www.grainger.com)).

A typical spill kit contains:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absorbent pads for petroleum (oil only) and other products (universal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absorbent material for spills (shop dry, floor sweep, kitty litter, sawdust)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic tubs or other containers with lids for packing, known as “overpacks”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absorbent “socks” for containing a spill, both petroleum and universal varieties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposable shop towels or heavy paper towels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acid neutralizers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goggles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large self-stick labels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chemically resistant gloves and boots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chemically resistant apron</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy-duty (3mil) plastic bags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent marker for labeling</li> </ul>

Many hazardous waste disposal services supply spill kits and spill response materials. See the back of this fact sheet for a partial list of regional vendors.

## If You Have A Spill

Determine the hazards of the spilled product (ignitable, reactive, corrosive, or toxic) so you can protect yourself and respond correctly. Check the most current MSDS if you are unfamiliar with the product.

Hazard Characteristic	Typical Products
Ignitable (flammable)	Fuels, solvents, alcohols, strippers, brush cleaners, resins, adhesives, epoxies, oil base paints, stains, sealers, coatings.
Corrosive	Concrete products and swimming pool products. Lye and some plumbing products.
Toxic (poisons)	All insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, fungicides. Other materials may have toxic properties depending on active ingredients.
Reactive (incompatible)	Bleach, iodine or chlorine disinfectants, peroxides (hardeners for fiberglass, plastic fillers, etc).

## To Contain and Clean Up A Small Spill

- 1) Assess whether you can clean up the spill without endangering the safety of yourself, other employees, customers, or the environment. If not possible, call for emergency assistance (911) and the Department of Ecology spill response team at (360) 407-6373. Keep a list of local spill clean up contractors that specialize in products you handle.

**Whenever in doubt about how to handle a spill, call Ecology for assistance.**

- 2) Retrieve your spill kit, stocked with materials appropriate for products you sell or store.
- 3) Consult the spilled product’s MSDS for how to clean up and dispose of the material. Look for key words, like “caution” and “danger” on a container of undamaged, identical product.

- 4) If the spilled materials are ignitable or reactive, safely remove local ignition sources, such as open flames, equipment with small engines, etc.
- 5) Use proper protective equipment, such as chemically resistant gloves, boots, goggles, apron, etc.
- 6) Ensure there is adequate ventilation in the clean up area. Open windows or vents to bring fresh air into the spill area.
- 7) Keep the spill from spreading by using absorbent materials.
- 8) Restrict public and employee access to the site to prevent exposures or dispersion.
- 9) Carefully absorb, scoop, or otherwise collect the spilled materials.
- 10) Place spilled materials, damaged containers, and used absorbent rags, pads, or other absorbent material into a sturdy container that has a lid (such as a 5 gallon plastic bucket, large re-sealable tubs, or totes with lids).
- 11) Label the container with product name (i.e. “Stop-Plant Weed-Killer”), hazard characteristic, and the date of the spill.
- 12) Place the container into proper storage (see below) and arrange for disposal. Dispose of the material as soon as possible.
- 13) If your shoes or clothing are contaminated, clean or remove them at the site of the spill. Do not track spilled materials away from the spill site. Thoroughly wash your hands and face after cleaning up spilled materials.

## Storage of Spilled Materials

Containers of spilled materials and contaminated absorbent materials should be stored in a secured, ventilated, dry area away from sources of heat, sparks, and water. Consult the product’s MSDS to identify other chemicals or products that should not be stored next to containers of spilled materials.

**Never** store the following products together:

- Acids with bases
- Acids or bases with fertilizers (note that “weed & feed” is a fertilizer)
- Flammable liquids with acids or bases
- Ammonia or other cleaners with bleach

***Accidental mixing of these and other incompatible chemicals may result in violent reactions that can release toxic vapors or start fires.***

In general, items that are in the same hazard class, such as flammable liquids, can be stored in the same area. However, the more you can segregate each type of product, the less likely you could have an incompatibility problem. Label all containers!

A dedicated waste storage area should be located away from exterior doors, floor drains and major travel routes. The area should be secured and wastes should never accumulate inside the storage area. Any shelving used to hold containers segregating the wastes should be adequately secured to the floor and wall to prevent accidental tipping.

## **Disposal of Wastes**

Wastes that result from spills of hazardous materials must be disposed of as hazardous waste. This waste includes any remaining product in the ruptured container, all absorbent materials used to contain the spill, and any disposable protective equipment, such as gloves and some types of aprons. These wastes should be stored in appropriate containers until removed by a hazardous waste disposal vendor, or taken to an alternate disposal location.

Small businesses can dispose of hazardous wastes at HazoHouse, Thurston County's hazardous waste collection facility. Businesses can drop by HazoHouse with wastes between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Disposal on other days can be scheduled by appointment with hazardous waste specialists from Environmental Health. The facility is located at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center, site of the closed Hawks Prairie Landfill, in Lacey.

## **Hazardous Waste Disposal Services**

Many private hazardous waste disposal firms serve Puget Sound. Your corporate office may already have a standing agreement with a regional or national waste management company to take care of wastes from individual stores.

If not, you can “shop” for a waste management contractor based on the type of waste that you have. A searchable database of regional hazardous waste service providers can be found on the Department of Ecology website at [www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/hwtr/hwsd/default.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/hwtr/hwsd/default.htm)

## **For More Information**

For answers to your questions about spill plans, training, or waste disposal options, please contact the Business Pollution Prevention Program at (360) 867-2664, Monday through Friday. The TDD line for the hearing impaired is (360) 867-2603. Thurston County Business Pollution Prevention Program has a number of fact sheets that can be requested by calling the office or viewed on our website:

[www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhw/index.html](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhw/index.html).