

# FIRST AID GUIDE

# CHEMICAL SPILLS

## 1 Handling Chemicals Safely

1. Handling chemicals safely will reduce the risks of accidents involving them. Personnel in charge of chemicals must be familiar with regulations on how to handle chemicals properly.
2. The proper Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) needed for handling chemical spills, such as gloves and masks, must always be available in a facility. Personnel should also be trained on how to use PPE.
3. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be readily available for all chemicals on a work site.

## 2 Personal Protection

1. Before helping a victim make sure that you or anyone else will not be in danger.
2. Wear appropriate PPE.
3. If the victim has fallen into the chemical or, if there is gas leak, they may have to be moved first before you can perform first aid.
4. If appropriate PPE gear is not available, call emergency services immediately and wait for them.



## 3 Check for Breathing

1. Check for a response and call for help.
2. Open victim's mouth and check for blockages. Roll onto side to clear any blockages. Tilt head back to clear and open airway.
3. Place your ear near the victim's face and listen for breathing. Feel for moving air on your cheek from the victim's nose and mouth.
6. Place your hand on the victim's stomach area and check for movement, which indicates breathing. If victim is not breathing start doing **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)** and call for a defibrillator.

## 4 Decontamination of the EYES

**When dealing with eye contamination, the aim is to disperse and dilute the chemical.**

1. Check the eyewash packaging seal is not broken and expiry date. If in doubt of the quality, do not use it.
2. If no eyewash available, check Safety Data Sheets to see if water can be used instead.
3. If water can be used then ensure water source and container are clean.
4. Call emergency services.
5. Make sure to wear gloves.
6. Hold the victim's head so affected eye falls under cool running water for 20 minutes.
7. If eye is shut, open it carefully and rinse for 20 minutes.
8. Ask victim to hold a sterile dressing over affected eye.
9. Identify the chemical involved and gather as much information about it as you can.



## 5 Decontamination of the BODY

1. Remove contaminated clothing. Use scissors, unless contaminated clothing is sticking to victim's skin.
2. If victim is conscious, assist into emergency shower.
3. If victim is unconscious, wash on the spot.
4. Use a hose or large water container and ensure clean water flows over contaminated parts for 20 minutes.
5. Ensure unaffected parts are not doused with contaminated water and call for medical help.

## 7 Controlling Risks

1. Perform a workplace risk assessment to ensure all practices are safe.
2. Chemicals should be stored in the appropriate containers and designated storage spaces.
3. Chemical waste should be properly disposed.
4. Proper transport should be provided for chemicals inside and outside the workplace.
5. All personnel in the workplace should be properly trained on what to do in case of a chemical spill.

## 6 Dealing with a Spillage

1. Make sure that everyone is safe. This could mean evacuating the area until it is properly cleaned up.
2. Identify the chemicals involved in the spillage.
3. Some spills may have to be contained.
4. Use absorbent pads to contain a chemical spill.
5. Prioritise areas where the chemical may meet other chemicals, electrical sources, and water drainage.
6. Ensure proper steps are taken to clean up the spill.

## 8 Following Up an Accident

1. Exposure to chemicals can cause other symptoms such as breathing problems.
2. Only use chemical antidotes if properly trained.
3. If possible, send chemical information with the victim to the hospital.
4. Inform the responding medical personnel about the nature of the accident and the kind of chemical involved so they can prepare the right PPE.
5. Report the accident to the safety officer.



**DISCLAIMER: The information in this poster is not a substitute for proper first aid training.**

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