EMPLOYEE SAFETY UPDATE

Emergency preparedness — Emergency chain of command

In-house workplace emergency procedures have a chain of command that links one person with overall responsibility for managing an emergency to others responsible for carrying out specific tasks to protect our workers. At the top of the chain is the emergency scene coordinator, who is trained to issue orders to others during the emergency. That person is responsible for:

- Assessing the incident to determine if it requires an emergency response.
- Determining if an evacuation is necessary and managing an evacuation.
- Supervising emergency scene assistants.
- Communicating with professional responders, such as ambulance, police and fire departments.
- Directing shutdown of critical workplace equipment or operations.

Emergency scene assistants will be assigned responsibility for a specific number of employees within a particular work area or department. They will know how to respond to the emergencies that may occur, the evacuation procedures, and how to use emergency communication equipment. They will also be trained in CPR, first aid, and how to respond to threats of violence. Some of their responsibilities include:

- Knowing who may need assistance during an evacuation and how to assist them.
- Coordinating the emergency activities of the employees.
- Knowing the workplace layout, appropriate escape routes and areas employees must not enter during an evacuation.
- Verifying that employees are in designated safe areas after an evacuation; it's your responsibility to follow the instructions provided by the emergency scene assistants.

Plastic Free July

The Plastic Free July campaign was launched in 2011 to work toward a world free of plastic waste. Later, it became a key initiative of the Plastic Free Foundation, which was established in 2017. Today, Plastic Free July is a global movement with over 140 million participants. The campaign provides ideas and resources to help people reduce plastic waste every day. In 2021, participants reduced their household waste and recycling by 33 pounds per person; globally, they reduced 2.1 billion tons of waste and recycling, including 661 million pounds of plastic consumption.

Plastic pollution is the accumulation of plastic objects and particles such as plastic bottles, bags, and microbeads in the Earth's environment that negatively affect wildlife, wildlife habitat and humans. Plastic pollution is prominent in the environment because plastic production by humans is high, as it's inexpensive and durable but slow to degrade. Nearly 400 million tons of plastic are produced each year and 50% is for single-use purposes. Although the amount of plastic production continues to rise each year, there have been significant efforts to reduce the amount of plastic pollution by decreasing plastic consumption, increasing litter cleanup and promoting plastic recycling.

You can participate in this year's Plastic Free July challenge by registering at www.plasticfreejuly.org and selecting what changes you want to make to help reduce plastic waste. Then, you can continue making changes beyond July! The following are just some of the many ways you can make an impact:

Before you make a purchase, ask yourself:

- Do I need this?
- Is there an option with less plastic packaging?
- Is there an alternative made from recycled materials?
- Can I purchase it from a local store rather than an online retailer?

At home:

- Use reusable food storage containers instead of plastic bags or cling wrap.
- Use a reusable water bottle instead of buying plastic ones.
- Avoid using cleaning products packaged in single-use plastic.
- Buy less takeout food, which is often packaged in plastic containers, and make your own meals.

At work:

- Conduct a bin audit to discover all the waste that could be avoided, recycled or composted.
- Encourage coworkers to participate in the Plastic Free July challenge.
- Bring your own cutlery, bowls, and cups instead of using the plastic ones offered in your workplace's eatery.

In your community:

- Organize a local park or beach cleanup.
- Support small businesses whose products come with less or recyclable packaging.
- Create a group of people in your community to help you stay motivated to avoid single-use plastic.
- Plan a plastic-free picnic with friends and family.

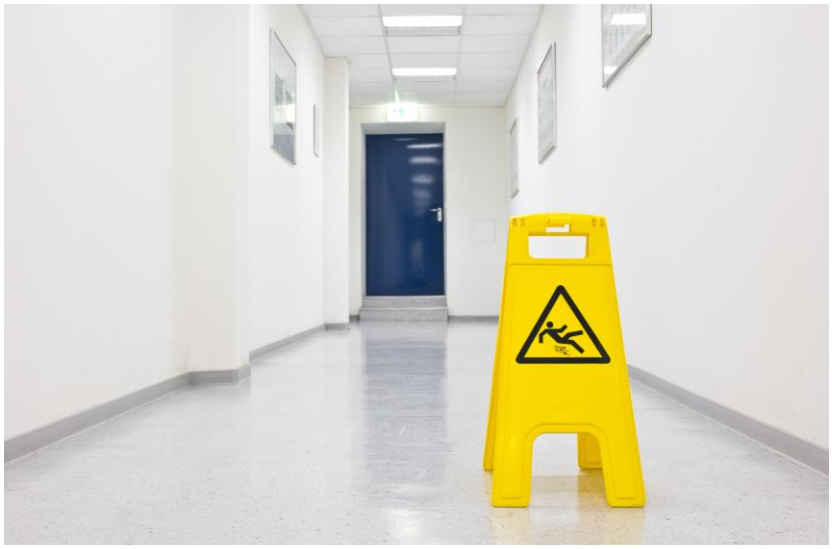
Fall protection—Preventing falls in general industry

To avoid slips and resulting falls, be on the lookout for foreign substances on the floor. Watch for deposits of water, food, grease, oil, sawdust, soap or debris. Even small quantities of these substances — sometimes almost too small to see — can be dangerous. When you come into work from outdoors in rainy or snowy weather, wipe your shoes thoroughly on the doormat, not just to keep the floor clean, but also to prevent the wetness of your shoes from making you slip and perhaps fall. Also, be sure to not turn too sharply when changing your direction.

Tripping hazards that are all too common are trash or unused materials left in aisles or other areas intended for pedestrian traffic, extension cords across paths of travel, tools not put away, and holes or unevenness in the floor. Additionally, it will help keep passageways clean if you make sure trash or waste goes in the trash barrel.

Also, walk where you're supposed to walk. Don't take shortcuts, especially through machinery areas. Hold on to the handrails when walking on stairs or traveling on steeper-than-ordinary ramps. Contrary to some beliefs, the use of handrails isn't a sign of infirmity, it's just good sense. If material or equipment is stored on stairways or ramps, move it or report it promptly.

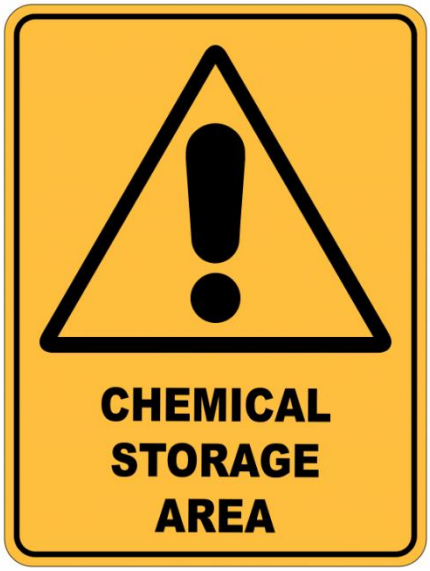
Horseplay — just plain goofing off — can be very dangerous. It can cause a trip, stumble, or fall by distracting a worker's attention from moving safely.



Handling and storage of reactive chemicals

All containers of reactive chemicals must be in good condition, properly labeled, and appropriately stored and handled. Safe practices for storing and handling reactive chemicals include:

- Storing, handling, and using the chemicals in well-ventilated areas and away from incompatible materials. If you have questions about incompatible materials, ask your supervisor or consult the safety data sheet (SDS) beforehand.
- Store the chemical in a cool and dry area, free of ignition sources, and within the recommended temperature ranges.
- Store smaller containers at a convenient height to reduce the risk of them being dropped.
- Prevent containers of friction-sensitive or shock-sensitive chemicals from sliding or being impacted.
- Keep containers closed when not in use, only dispense the chemical into compatible containers, and never return unused chemicals to the original container.
- Never keep a chemical for longer than the chemical supplier recommends.
- Ensure unused waste chemicals are properly handled and disposed of as a reactive hazardous waste and never disposed of in the sink or poured down a drain.
- Practice good housekeeping—for example, ensuring combustible wastes are promptly removed from any area where a reactive chemical is used or stored.
- Use proper spill containment. Small containers should be stored in a tray made of compatible material, and for bigger containers, the storage area should be diked or otherwise contained.
- All storage areas should have appropriate signs and be equipped with appropriate firefighting and spill cleanup equipment. Only properly trained and authorized personnel are allowed in the storage areas.



Chemical Spotlight

Ethyl alcohol

Ethyl alcohol is a clear, colorless liquid with a wine-like odor. It's used in alcoholic beverages, as a solvent, and in making other chemicals.

Ethyl alcohol isn't compatible with acetyl bromide, acetyl chloride, concentrated sulfuric acid, potassium, hydrogen peroxide, isocyanates, mineral acids, chloroform and strong oxides. Store the chemical in tightly closed containers in a cool, dark, well-ventilated area away from sunlight. Sources of ignition are prohibited where ethyl alcohol is used, handled or stored. Metal containers involving the transfer of ethyl alcohol should be grounded and bonded. Use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings wherever the chemical is used, handled and stored. Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of ethyl alcohol.

If ethyl alcohol is spilled or leaked, avoid breathing vapors, mist or gas, and ensure adequate ventilation. Remove all sources of ignition and evacuate personnel to safe areas. Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including goggles or safety glasses, gloves, flame-retardant protective clothing and respiratory protection.

Prevent further leakage or spillage if safe to do so, and don't let the product enter drains, sewers, underground or confined spaces, groundwater, or waterways or discharge into the environment. Absorb liquids in dry sand, earth, or a noncombustible material, and deposit in sealed containers. Ventilate and wash the area after cleanup is complete. It may be necessary to contain and dispose of ethyl alcohol as a hazardous waste. Contact the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and local environmental regulatory agency for specific recommendations.