All accidents, regardless of severity, should be reported and investigated.

Key elements of an emergency procedure plan are summarized by the acronym NEAR; Notify, Evacuate, Assemble, Report.

CHEMICAL SPILLS

All chemical spills shall be reported in writing to the A&M Environmental Health Services Hazardous Materials Section, regardless of size. The report shall include the date, time, location, chemical(s) and their volume, and names of all persons involved, including any visitors who were exposed and personnel involved in the clean up. A copy of this report shall also be kept by the Departmental Chemical Hygiene Officer.

A. Emergency Spills

A chemical spill is classified as an Emergency Spill whenever it:

1. Causes personal injury or chemical exposure that requires medical attention;
2. Causes a fire hazard or uncontrollable volatility;
3. Requires a need for breathing apparatus of the supplied air or self-contained type to handle the material involved;
4. Involves or contaminates a public area;
5. Causes airborne contamination that requires local or building evacuation;
6. Causes a spill that cannot be controlled or isolated by laboratory personnel;
7. Causes damage to university property that will require repairs;
8. Involves any quantity of metallic mercury;
9. Cannot be properly handled due to lack of local trained personnel and/or equipment to perform a safe, effective cleanup;
10. Requires prolonged or overnight cleanup;
11. Involves an unknown substance; or
12. Enters the land or water.

Although the following tactics are prioritized in terms of usual preferred action sequences, each spill incident is unique and involves persons with varying levels of spill expertise and experience. Thus, for any individual incident, isolation of the spill and/or securing the area might best occur prior to or simultaneously with contacting campus police.

1. Contact the Campus Police for Assistance (911). Notify the police dispatcher of location of the spill and, if known, the chemical spilled.
2. Don't panic! Always send for help first, if possible.
3. If the spill presents an immediate danger, leave the spill site and warn others, control entry to the spill site, and wait for A&M HAZMAT response.
4. Remove contaminated clothing. Flush skin/eyes with water at least 15 minutes to 30; use soap for intermediate and final cleaning of skin areas.
5. Protect yourself, then remove injured person(s) to fresh air, if safe to do so.
6. Notify nearby persons and evacuate as necessary. Prevent entry, as necessary, by posting a guard in a safe area and/or shutting doors.
7. If flammable vapors are involved, do not operate electrical switches unless to turn off motorized equipment. Try to turn off or remove heat sources, where safe to do so.
8. If the substance involved is an unknown, then emergency spill response procedures are limited to self-protection, notification of Campus Police at 911 for response, isolation of the chemical, and evacuating and securing the area involved.
9. Do not touch the spill without protective clothing.
10. Where the spill does not present immediate personal danger, try to control the spread or volume of the spill. This could mean shutting a door, moving nearby equipment to prevent further contamination, repositioning an overturned container or one that has a hole in the bottom or side, creating a dike by putting an absorbent around a spill or opening the sashes on the fume hoods to facilitate removal of vapors.

11. Never assume gases or vapors do not exist or are harmless because of lack of smell.

12. Increase ventilation by opening closed fume hood sashes to the 12 inch or full open position. Exterior doors may be opened to ventilate non-toxic vapors.

13. Use absorbents to collect substances. Reduce vapor concentrations by covering the surface of a liquid spill with absorbent. Control enlargement of the spill area by diking with absorbent.

B. Minor Spills

Minor spills are those spills which do not fit the requirements for Emergency Spills.

The following general procedures should be used for all minor spills:

1. Attend to any persons who may have been contaminated. If these persons require medical attention this is an Emergency Spill (see above).

2. Notify persons in the immediate area about the spill.

3. Evacuate all nonessential personnel from the spill area.

4. If the spilled material is flammable, turn off ignition and heat sources.

5. Avoid breathing vapors of the spilled material. If respiratory protection is necessary this is an Emergency Spill (see above).

6. Leave on or establish exhaust ventilation if it is safe to do so.

7. Secure supplies to effect cleanup.

8. Don appropriate personnel protective equipment.

9. Spilled Liquids

- Confine or contain the spill to a small area. Do not let it spread.
- For small quantities of inorganic acids or bases, use a neutralizing agent or an absorbent mixture (e.g., soda ash or diatomaceous earth). For small quantities of other materials, absorb the spill with a nonreactive material (such as vermiculite, clay, dry sand, or towels).
- For larger amounts of inorganic acids and bases, flush with large amounts of water (providing the water will not cause additional damage). Flooding is not recommended in storerooms where violent spattering may cause additional hazards or in areas where water-reactive chemicals may be present.
- Mop up the spill, wringing out the mop in a sink or a pail equipped with rollers.
- Carefully pick up and clean any cartons or bottles that have been splashed or immersed.
- If needed, vacuum the area with a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner approved and designed for the material involved.
- If the spilled material is extremely volatile, let it evaporate and be exhausted by the laboratory hood (provided that the hood is authorized for use with the spilled chemical).

10. Spilled Solids

- Generally, sweep spilled solids of low toxicity into a dust pan and place them into a container suitable for that chemical. Additional precautions such as the use of a vacuum cleaner equipped with a HEPA filter may be necessary when cleaning up spills of more highly toxic solids.
- Dispose of residues according to safe disposal procedures. Remembering that personal protective equipment, brooms, dust pans, and other items may require special disposal procedures. Report the chemical spill in writing as required above.