

Chemicals of many kinds are commonly used on university campuses. Laboratories, building maintenance and grounds-keeping are just a few examples of areas where chemicals are used. Many chemicals pose hazards to the people exposed to them. Faculty, staff and students need to know the potential hazards of the chemicals with which they work. The UNK Hazardous Materials Program can provide assistance in recycling or disposing of unwanted and waste chemicals. The program can also assist in disposal of biological waste.

Major goals of the Haz Mat Program are:

To assist faculty, staff and students with protecting themselves and others from hazards posed by working with chemicals.

Protect the environment by ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. This is done by developing a collaborative relationship with faculty, staff and students and by performing periodic safety checks of work areas;

Manage the proper disposal of hazardous, biological and other regulated wastes.

The UNK Haz Mat Program helps employees:

Review the hazards of materials before they are purchased and assist in finding less hazardous substitutes when possible.

Determine safe storage conditions for toxic, corrosive and/or flammable chemicals.

Learn safe procedures for using hazardous materials and help determine which personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed.

Maintain a database of safety data sheets for chemicals used at UNK.

Properly dispose of hazardous wastes, unwanted surplus chemicals and biological wastes.

DEFINITIONS

Hazardous material - any substance capable of posing a risk to human health, the environment and/or property. Examples: mercury, lead, solvents, acids, caustic chemicals and aerosols.

Hazardous waste - a hazardous material that is no longer useful to anyone and must be properly disposed. Examples: solvents used in a cleaning process, unwanted oil-based paint, acidic or caustic chemicals used to clean, many unwanted laboratory chemicals, old photographic chemicals and mercury thermometers.

Universal waste - a category of hazardous waste materials that are commonly generated. Regulations have been streamlined to make recycling and disposal of these materials easier. Universal waste includes: all batteries except alkaline batteries, fluorescent lamps, HID lamps, electronic equipment, pesticides.

Biological waste and sharps - unwanted materials contaminated with blood, blood products, tissues, cultures, cells, other potentially infectious materials. Human, animal and plant pathogens are biological wastes. Potentially infectious body fluids are biological waste.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) - provide vital information about the products that you use. SDS include warnings of hazardous properties, information about how to protect yourself when using a product, how to clean up a spill, special fire-fighting procedures, information about the reactivity of a product, storage and handling precautions. SDS must be made available to persons using hazardous chemicals.

Get answers to FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS on the web or by emailing hardingr@UNK.edu or by calling 308-627-5355.

What do I do with dead batteries?

What do I do with unwanted paint?

What do I do with unwanted computers and other electronic equipment?

What do I do with unwanted chemicals?

What do I do with unwanted aerosol cans?

What items should not go into the trash?

Where do I find information about the chemicals that I work with?

BASIC CHEMICAL SAFETY TIPS:

- Prepare for accidents by reading labels and SDS before using chemicals.
- Wear appropriate protective apparel (goggles, gloves, boots, etc.).
- Locate a first aid kit, fire extinguisher and other safety equipment before using chemicals.
- Don't smoke, eat or drink while working with chemicals.
- If you work with chemicals that generate irritating or hazardous fumes, make sure the area is well ventilated.
- Avoid working alone.
- Keep a current inventory of chemicals stored in each room.
- Put used hazardous chemicals in designated waste containers.
- Don't put acids in metal containers; use safety-coated glass or plastic containers.
- Don't mix acids with bases or bleach.
- Don't mix oxidizers with organic material.
- Don't mix flammable liquids or acids with nitrates.
- Don't mix propane, gasoline or turpentine with chlorine.
- Don't mix sulfuric acid (battery acid) with strong bases (caustics), perchlorates or water.

IN CASE OF A CHEMICAL SPILL:

For small spills, consult the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or call UNK's Hazardous Materials Technician at (308)627-5355, Facilities Management at (308)865-1800 or University Police at (308)865-8911. Collect all spill residue and used absorbent for collection by the Hazardous Materials Technician.

For large spills, call UNK's Hazardous Materials Technician at (308)627-5355, Facilities Management at (308)865-1800 or University Police at (308)865-8911 or Kearney's Emergency Services at 911.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL 911

For questions regarding hazardous materials storage, usage or disposal, contact Robin Harding, Hazardous Materials Technician at (308)627-5355.

Kimberley Orcutt, manager of UNK hazardous materials program: (308)865-8581

UNK Facilities Management: (308)865-1800 or (308)865-1700

Other useful telephone numbers:

University Police at (308)865-8911 (office)

Kearney City Police: (308)237-2104

Buffalo County Sheriff: (308)236-8555

Kearney-Buffalo County Emergency Management: (308)233-3225

The Poison Center: (800) 955-9119 or (800) 222-1222

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