



Hazardous Materials Training

This training is in two parts:

- 1) This document, describing the dangers inherent in hazardous materials and what to do if you suspect they are present in your immediate environment.
- 2) Chemical Training, covering MSDS sheets and chemical recognition and safety

Hazardous Materials

At their most basic hazardous materials are those chemicals or substances one should exercise extreme caution around so as to mitigate the risk of injury to self or others.

Hazard materials are defined, typically, differently by different agencies: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Dept of Transportation (USDOT), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The kind of hazardous material will likely dictate which agency is involved.

Overview

At our level, in Facebook (or any other facility) we need to be aware of what potentially dangerous/hazardous materials may be around us. These materials, if improperly handled or with extended exposure can result in lots of unpleasantness. Exposure can come in a number of forms:

Chemical: harmful or lethal chemical reactions

Thermal: Corrosive agents resulting in mild to severe burns

Radiological: Damage to DNA due to radiation exposure

Mechanical: trauma caused by misuse of materials or improper storage, from pressure for instance

Asphyxiation: impairment or restrictions to breathing or damage to lungs

What To Do

Keeping harm at arm's length is a pretty straightforward process . . .

Recognize—be aware—of what constitutes a potential hazard

Isolate yourself from it—don't attempt to clean it up or handle an open container

Protect you and others in the area to minimize exposure
Notify Security immediately!

Be Aware

Most of what we do doesn't involve overly hazardous materials, but we are occasionally in areas where others may have stored or are using potentially hazardous materials . . . or have left behind something hazardous, like, say, a container of caustic chemical.

Labeling—Most hazardous materials will have some kind of labeling, although labels (or signage) is not always required. Most chemical bottles or containers will have an NFPA panel icon on it. We'll get to that in a moment in the Chemical Training document. Just remember that if you see the little diamond-shaped icon on a container there's a chance it may have some level of hazard potential to it.

Surroundings—If you're in a riser room or water treatment room, be aware of what is mechanically going on. Rooms with large pipes can often mean there are materials (gases, chemicals, water) under very high pressure. If that pressure is released, accidentally or otherwise, steam can cause severe burns or there may be small shards of metal or plastic which instantly become projectiles.

There are specific cleaners we use all the time: Simple Green, Ajax, multi-purpose cleaners, etc. **Those are the only materials we should ever handle.** If you're sweeping a storage room and come across containers with other cleaners or chemicals there's no reason to handle it. If you suspect it may, in fact, present some kind of safety or health hazard **don't touch it**, let Security know and they will take it from there.

We have had crew members find hypodermic needles in bathrooms, without covers. These were carelessly tossed into the trash. Just because you can't see a potential hazard doesn't mean it may not be there—absence of evidence does not necessarily imply evidence of absence. Be careful and alert at all times!

In Summary . . .

- Always be aware of what's around you
- If you see a potential hazard let Security know immediately
- Be mindful that seemingly minor liquids can actually cause great harm—you don't always need to touch them to be hurt, just breathing them in may cause harm.