



# The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

## Cleaning Product Safety Tips

### *Know the hazards of working with chemicals*

We should always use caution when working with common chemical cleaners and other chemical products. Many traditional cleaning products – such as glass cleaner, floor finish, metal polish, toilet bowl cleaner and disinfectants – contain solvents that can be harmful to the body. These solvents are hazardous and can cause injuries from mild health effects, such as skin and eye irritation, to long-term diseases, such as heart and kidney failure, sterility or cancer.

#### What identifies the hazards?

Containers for cleaning products must each have a label. Each label is required to contain the name of the product; the applicable hazard warnings; and the name, address and phone number of the manufacturer. If the labels are worn or unreadable, they should be replaced. If a container doesn't have a label, tell your supervisor. Do not use it.

All cleaning products come with safety data sheets (SDSs). SDSs should always be available where the chemicals are being used and stored.

#### What can you do to use chemicals safely?

Regardless of whether the chemical container does or doesn't have a label, do not sniff it to see if you can identify what's inside. A small sniff of a hazardous chemical can be dangerous and deadly. Here are some additional tips to help in staying safe and healthy when working with these products:

- Use mild cleaners for regular cleaning. Save stronger chemicals for stubborn stains.
- Dilute chemicals with as much water as possible while still getting the job done. Follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Open windows and doors, if possible, when using chemicals.



"Ooooooh... I was wondering why a water bucket was labeled 'hazardous chemical'..."

**Continued**

## news & notes

### CLEANING PRODUCT SAFETY QUIZ

1. Traditional cleaning solvents are not dangerous to you or to your health.

True or False

2. You do not need to replace a label if it is worn; others will know what chemical it is by its looks.

True or False

3. \_\_\_\_\_ should always be available where the chemicals are being stored in your workplace.

A. Safety data sheets (SDS)

B. Water

C. Fire escape plans

4. Use stronger chemicals for normal cleaning. Do not use mild cleaners because they don't work.

True or False

5. You should store chemicals in small, closed storage spaces and within direct sunlight.

True or False

See page 2 for answers



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## Cleaning Product Safety Tips, continued

- Never mix chemicals unless instructed to do so by the manufacturer, especially ammonia and bleach – this is a lethal combination.
- Close all containers, especially spray bottles, when not in use.
- Pour chemicals (such as toilet bowl cleaner) from a low height to avoid splashing.
- Never smoke around cleaning chemicals.
- Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, safety glasses and respirators, when pouring or diluting chemicals.
- Chemicals require proper storage. Never store chemicals near electrical equipment or in heat or direct sunlight. Use a well-ventilated area for storage.

If you have questions or concerns, see the label, the SDS, or your supervisor.

## Cleaning Product Safety Quiz Answers

**1. False.** Many traditional cleaning products contain solvents that can cause injuries from mild health effects, such as skin and eye irritation, to long-term diseases, such as heart failure or cancer. **2. False.** Don't use a chemical that doesn't have a label. If the labels are unreadable, they should be replaced. If a container doesn't have a label, tell your supervisor. **3. A.** You should always look for the SDS near the cleaning product that is being stored. You should know the hazards of each chemical. **4. False.** Most mild cleaners can take care of everyday cleaning issues. Only use stronger chemicals when absolutely necessary. **5. False.** Only store chemicals in well-ventilated areas and out of direct sunlight.

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## Got News?

Do you have news that needs to be circulated or have a subject you would like for us to address? Let us know by emailing the newsletter editor at [tcreel@arkhospitals.org](mailto:tcreel@arkhospitals.org).

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. [www.bxsi.com](http://www.bxsi.com). In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control. Tina Creel, President of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The Board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.