



## **Safety & Risk Office 5-Minute Safety Talk No. 6 – Responding to a Chemical or Oil Spill**

*Note to Supervisor: This 5-Minute Safety Talk (in some places, it might be called a Toolbox Talk or a Tailgate Talk) is designed not only to communicate important safety information to your employees, but also to be given to them by you, which will hopefully reinforce the message and let them know your expectations for safety. You can use the text below as a script to be rendered verbatim or just as talking points to be stated in your own words. Please also complete the attendance listing on the last page and send it to Safety & Risk, Mail Stop 66.*

Despite the best efforts of faculty and students to work carefully in the laboratory, accidents resulting in the release of chemicals or hazardous waste may occur. Likewise, the potential for spills in Hazardous Waste Accumulation Areas maintained by the Facilities Department also exists. Automobile accidents anywhere on campus can result in releases of gasoline or oil. Operation of the vehicle refueling stations maintained by Facilities may result in gasoline or diesel spills. Leaks or releases of oil or hydraulic fluid from elevators, aerial lifts or the vehicle lift in the Facilities Garage may also occur. It is important to know how to respond when a spill or release of a chemical or petroleum product occurs in order to minimize harm to personnel and property or to the environment.

The first thing to remember is that each area where these materials are used or stored has a spill kit that contains absorbents (such as spill socks, pillows or pads and vermiculite), neutralizers (such as sodium or calcium carbonate for acids and sodium bisulfate for alkalis), clean-up equipment (such as a broom, a brush, a dust pan, plastic bags and a receptacle for clean-up residues) and personal protective equipment (such as protective gloves, splash goggles and a dust mask-type respirator).

Unknown chemicals are not allowed on the College's campuses. Those chemicals that are allowed are not highly toxic or reactive, and the quantities of them in storage or use are relatively small. Accordingly, spills and releases of chemicals or hazardous waste would be expected to be incidental or minor, and responses to them would consist of the following steps:

1. Alert people in the immediate area of spill and have them clear the area so it can be cleaned up.
2. Isolate the area by closing doors, etc. as necessary.
3. If spilled material is flammable, remove or turn off ignition and heat sources and unplug nearby electrical equipment.

4. Establish exhaust ventilation, if possible, by turning on fume hoods; avoid breathing vapors from the spill.
5. Contact the campus Facilities Manager to obtain cleanup assistance from Facilities personnel if necessary.
6. Locate the spill kit.
7. Put on personal protective equipment (PPE), including safety goggles, suitable gloves and long-sleeved lab coat.
8. Block or cover any nearby floor drains using spill socks, absorbent material or drain covers.
9. Confine and contain the spill by applying spill socks/pillows/pads or other appropriate absorbent material, first around the outside of the spill, encircling the spilled material to prevent its outward movement, then absorb to the center of the spill.
10. Use appropriate materials to neutralize inorganic acid and base spills.
11. For solid/dry chemical spills, cover the spill with a slightly damp paper towel to avoid creating a cloud of dust and push the material into a dustpan or other collection receptacle using the towel.
12. Sweep material, used absorbents/neutralizing agents, etc. into a plastic dust pan and place into a plastic bucket or bag.
13. Wet mop the spill area. Be sure to decontaminate the broom, dustpan, etc. with soap and water.
14. Place all contaminated PPE into a plastic bag.
15. Store waste in designated area until a waste pick-up is scheduled.
16. Notify Security after you have cleaned up the spill so that the incident can be documented.
17. Notify the Safety & Risk Manager for assessment of the response actions.

The sequence of steps for a petroleum product spill or release is similar. All of the College's Aboveground Storage Tanks (ASTs) containing petroleum product are located on paved areas (impervious surfaces), which limits the environmental impacts of spills/releases from them.

1. If a spill occurs during fuel transfer operation (i.e., filling of ASTs or vehicle refueling), shutdown the pumping.
2. Eliminate sources of ignition, such as open flames or sparks.
3. Locate the spill kit.
4. Put on personal protective equipment (PPE), including safety goggles and suitable gloves.
5. Block flow to any nearby storm drains (floor drains if inside a building) using spill socks or absorbent material.
6. Confine and contain the spill by applying spill socks/pillows/pads or other appropriate absorbent material, first around the outside of the spill, encircling the spilled material to prevent its outward movement, then absorb to the center of the spill.
7. Sweep material, used absorbents, etc. into a plastic dust pan and place into a plastic bucket or bag.
8. Place all contaminated PPE into a plastic bag.
9. Store waste in designated area until a waste pick-up is scheduled.

10. Notify Security after you have cleaned up the spill so that the incident can be documented.
11. Notify the Safety & Risk Manager so that appropriate notifications to outside agencies can be made if necessary and for assessment of the response actions.

In summary, the general response to any spill or release of a chemical, hazardous waste or petroleum product is as follows: stop the flow; absorb the spill; sweep it up; dispose of the clean-up residues and materials appropriately; notify appropriate personnel.

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Attendance List**

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Printed Name</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>Signature</b>
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**Send to the Safety & Risk Office, Mail Stop # 66, when completed.**