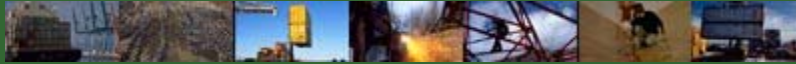




Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 08-1101

DEADLY MIXES

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

The mixing of chemicals can result in fires, explosions and/or serious injury including death. Take vinegar for instance, who would consider it a chemical? The definition of a chemical is “a substance created by a chemical process;” and the fermentation of grapes to obtain vinegar is a chemical process. There are many common household cleaners such as chlorinated bleaches (sodium hypochlorite) that when combined with an acid such as vinegar can generate a toxic gas so strong that any number of physical problems or even death may result if vapors from the mixture are inhaled.

It has been estimated that a new and potentially toxic chemical is introduced into industry every 20 minutes. People are bombarded with literature and advertisements for chemicals that will improve their lives. These chemicals are designed to clean better, grow plants faster, kill more bugs, etc. Under the right conditions and when used as directed by the manufacturer, these claims can be true. Unfortunately, some people think that one good chemical mixed with another chemical makes both better. The results can be devastating.

Even chemicals designed to be mixed, can be dangerous if mixed incorrectly. For example, consider two part paints, those that come with a chemical catalyst that causes the paint to react during application. Used correctly this reaction creates a more durable protective coating. Both chemicals are flammable organic liquids and it is easy to assume that excess supplies can be disposed of together. When both chemicals are mixed incorrectly in a waste paint drum, the catalyst causes the paint to harden. The reaction creates both heat and pressure inside the drum, and can cause an explosion.

Improperly storing chemicals together or in near proximity is also dangerous due to the risk of leaks or spills of incompatible chemicals mixing. People have been killed or seriously injured while trying to cleanup spilled cleaning materials that have mixed with an incompatible chemical. A company supplying liquid chemicals for commercial dishwashing had a fleet of small box trucks, which had wooden floors. As drivers loaded the trucks, industrial strength chlorine would sometimes spill onto the wooden floor. As a result, several truck boxes had a distinctive bleach odor. This was not an issue for many years until an employee dropped a gallon jug of ammonia based cleaner onto the wood floor causing the cap to fail. The resulting cloud of gas in the truck caused the warehouse to be evacuated and ventilated before it was safe to reenter. Fortunately, the employee in the back of the truck was able to escape with only minor irritation of the trachea and lungs.

Required Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) can alert workers to the dangers of each chemical and lists dangerous reactions with other chemicals, however, this information is useless unless it is read, understood, and used. If you do not understand the language or terms of the MSDS, find someone who does. Do not guess, your health and life depend on you understanding these hazards.

SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: _____ MEETING DATE: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** _____
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.
5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.
6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.
7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: _____ TIME FINISHED: _____

MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____ TITLE: _____