



Guidance Note

May 2007

Spill Absorbents

HWG-023

This information is for your use and as a way of providing consistent information. There is no response required.

SPILL ABSORBENT GUIDELINES

The following listings give the preferred order in which to use absorbent materials for the corresponding spilled materials.

1. **FLAMMABLE SOLVENTS** (alcohols, acetonitrile, acetone, hexane, xylene, etc.)

- a. Solusorb (charcoal)
- b. Charcoal
- c. Spill pillows or spill socks

2. **POISON LIQUIDS** (acrylamide, chloroform, methylene chloride, formamide, phenol, etc.)

- a. Solusorb (charcoal)
- b. Charcoal
- c. Spill pillows or spill socks

3. **FORMALDEHYDE OR GLUTARALDEHYDE**

- a. Spill-XFP (green crystals)
- b. Solusorb (charcoal)
- c. Charcoal or spill pillows or spill socks

4. **ACIDS** (trichloroacetic acid, TCA, hydrochloric, nitric, phosphoric, acetic, formic)

- a. Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate, do not use if heavy metals or toxic chemicals present)
- b. Soda ash (sodium carbonate, do not use if heavy metals or toxic chemicals present)
- c. Use floor dry or diatomaceous earth for acids mixed with heavy metals or toxic chemicals

5. **BASES or CAUSTICS** (sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide)

- a. Citric acid
- b. Floor dry or diatomaceous earth

6. **OXIDIZERS** (30% hydrogen peroxide, potassium permanganate, ammonium persulfate)

- a. Floor dry or diatomaceous earth (do not use charcoal or Solusorb)
- b. Reduce oxidizers with sodium metabisulfite if you understand oxidation/reduction reaction
- c. Osmium tetroxide (aqueous 2% or 4 % should be reduced with sodium metabisulfite)

7. **HUMAN BLOOD or INFECTIOUS AGENTS**

- a. Use Isolyzer to solidify large volumes of infectious liquids
- b. Disinfect cleaned spill site with fresh 10% bleach solution
- c. Disinfect metal surfaces with Virex (bleach corrodes metals)

8. **METALLIC MERCURY SPILLS**

- a. Do not use the mercury absorbent (expensive debris to dispose), use the mercury vacuum cleaner instead. Turn off lights in room and use flashlight to locate the mercury beads. For heated mercury or large spills (more than 1 pound) check airborne mercury levels with the Jerome mercury sniffer (PEL 0.1 ppm). If the PEL is exceeded use mercury cartridges for the half face respirator or a SCBA.