

# 12 STEPS TO SPILL CONTAINMENT

When someone discovers a spill the following questions must be answered:

- What is the contaminant?
- Can the area be entered safely?
- Is necessary product information available (MSDS sheets etc.)?
- Does the person have the knowledge of the appropriate procedures and the ability to be of assistance?

To appropriately and efficiently approach a hazardous spill the following steps should be followed.

## STEP 1 – GET AWAY

If a hazardous spill is discovered, the first step is to move to a safe distance from the spill. All ignition sources and equipment should be turned off if possible.

## STEP 2 – IDENTIFY WHAT WAS SEEN

Accurately describe what was seen. What was it? Was it solid, liquid, or gas? Where was it? Did it have a familiar odor? What were the weather conditions?

## STEP 3 – GET HELP

Follow company procedures. Notify the key contact immediately and report the details of the spill.

## STEP 4 – HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Determine the hazards by obtaining the Material Safety Data Sheets, read labels, identifying signs or Transportation of Dangerous Goods placards. If this becomes necessary, responders should assume the worst and use the highest level of personal protection equipment.

## STEP 5 – ALERT OTHERS AND EVACUATE UNNECESSARY PERSONNEL.

## STEP 6 – SECURE THE AREA AND ESTABLISH SPILL BOUNDARY.

## STEP 7 – PREPARE A PLAN OF ACTION

After the hazard has been identified, the team should prepare an action plan. Environmental conditions such as wind direction, potential for rain and what happens on the site ought to be considered. Prepare for emergency vehicle access.

## STEP 8 – SECURE PROPER EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS.

Establish levels of personal protection equipment required by determining potential hazards. Choose equipment such as spark proof tools if flammable liquids are involved.

## STEP 9 – ESTABLISHED DECONTAMINATION AND FIRST AID STATIONS

In the event that someone is injured establish decontamination procedures. Arrange for medical assistance and support if necessary. Material Safety Data Sheets will provide the health and medical data required for the hazardous material.

## STEP 10 – CONTAIN THE SPILL

The goal is to limit the spread of contaminant and thus maximize safety and minimize liability costs.

## STEP 11 – CLEAN UP THE SPILL

The goal here is to limit the spread of the contamination, remove contaminant from protective clothing before removal, and clean the equipment. Sorbents used to clean up the spill are often classified as hazardous waste. Absorbed materials have the same properties as the spill material. Sorbents must be properly packaged for disposal according to municipal, provincial, state and federal regulations.

## STEP 12 – INVESTIGATE AND EVALUATE

The cause of the accident needs to be investigated and evaluated in order to prevent further occurrences. Evaluate the plan to determine if improvements are necessary. Improvements should be built into quarterly spill accident exercises. All supplies should be replenished immediately.