

7 Steps for Spill Response

1. Assess the Risk

Before you attempt to clean up a spill, make sure you are taking into account everything that might be affected by that spill. Look at the risks to human health, the environment, and property. If possible, identify the spilled material and determine how much has spilled.

2. Select Protective Equipment

Choose appropriate PPE to safely respond to the spill. This could include goggles, gloves, or respirators. If you are uncertain of the danger or if the spilled material is unknown, assume the worst and use the highest level of protection.

3. Confine the Spill- Speed Counts

Limit the spill area by blocking, diverting or confining the spill. Stop the spread of liquid before it has a chance to contaminate a water source. Spill kits are designed to facilitate a quick, effective response. Nonabsorbent barriers such as containment booms, drain covers, and spill berms are also available to confine liquids, minimize the spill area, and protect drains.

4. Stop the Source

After the spill is confined, stop the source of the spill. This may involve simply turning a container upright, closing a valve, or plugging a leak from a damaged drum or container. Be sure to transfer liquids from the damaged container to a new one.



5. Implement Cleanup

Once the spill is confined and the source has been stopped, it is time to develop a plan of action for implementing the spill cleanup. Simply place absorbents that are chemically compatible with the liquid spilled throughout the spill area. Once the absorbents are saturated, they should be disposed properly. Sorbents do not render liquids nonflammable, neutral, or less hazardous and will take on the characteristics/properties of whatever liquid is absorbed. Therefore, all measures must be taken as if you were handling the liquid itself. Sorbents do not make the liquid less hazardous. Always refer to the MSDS for the chemical absorbed before proceeding.

6. Decontaminate

Decontaminate the site, personnel, and equipment by removing or neutralizing the hazardous materials that have accumulated during the spill. This may involve removing and disposing of contaminated media, such as earth that was exposed during the spill incident. An effective decontamination area ensures the health and safety of emergency responders.

7. Complete Required Reports

Complete all notifications and reporting required by local, state, and federal guidelines for reporting spill incidents. Failure to do so can result in severe penalties. Necessary reports can include medical record reports, company incident reports, Local Emergency Planning Commission reports, or National Response Center reports.