

Veterinary Insurance Program



Veterinary Loss Prevention Program

Handling Hazardous Materials in the Veterinary  
Setting

# Handling Hazardous Materials in the Veterinary Setting

## Trainer's Overview

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**To have your employees get the most out of their training sessions, it is suggested that:**

- **The training sessions should be conducted in a relatively quiet uninterrupted environment.**
- **The sessions should be held the same time and day of the month (i.e., first Tuesday at 12:30).**
- **Employee handouts should be given out along with pencils/pens.**
- **Review the trainers guide, employee handout and any references.**
- **Keep the sessions to a maximum of 20 minutes.**
- **Give personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked for you.**
- **Ensure that all employees present sign the Safety Training Sign-in Sheet for documentation purposes.**
- **If some employees were not present, a second training session should be given.**

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## Trainer's Guide

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### What you need to know about handling hazardous materials?

There are numerous hazardous materials present in the veterinary workplace. They range from pharmaceuticals to cleaning and maintenance substances. All hazardous materials must be correctly classified in terms of their hazard levels.

In California, there are two major Cal OSHA regulations that address safe handling of hazardous chemicals: The Hazard Communication Standard, or HazCom, and the Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP).

As part of HazCom all businesses need to review all the chemicals and other substances to determine if they are considered hazardous. Hazardous chemicals or substances must be added to the list of hazardous substances in the facility.

All chemicals that are considered hazardous should initially be accompanied with a manufacturers' data sheet known as the Safety Data Sheet or SDS. The SDS's will clearly show adequate and accurate warnings when the chemical poses potential hazard.

If you do not already have an SDS you should obtain one from the manufacturer or supplier. Please note that there are companies that for a fee can keep your SDS's online or obtain one instantly for you.

Cal OSHA's IIPP also requires employers to establish, implement and maintain effective procedures for identifying and evaluating workplace hazards, including chemical hazards and other unsafe conditions, and to develop safe work practices for all job classifications, including for those handling hazardous materials.

Both standards mandate training for employees on job hazards, and how to control them. The IIPP also requires a system for communicating with employees designed to encourage employees to inform the employer of hazards through meetings, training

programs, posting, written communications, and anonymous notification.

### Who is at Risk?

Each veterinary facility must evaluate their own situation and know the following:

- Who are my team members that physically handle chemicals or other hazardous materials?
- Are there office-wide rules in place relating to methods and procedures for managing hazardous substances?
- How can I monitor the actions of team members that handle these materials?
- Where can I get the appropriate information to set up and establish rules relating to hazardous material handling?

### Best Practice

A Best Practice for veterinary facility management is to recognize that the most effective mechanism to minimize building or equipment damage, and employee injuries is through a combination of engineering and work practice controls.

### Engineering Controls

- Supervisors should understand and document:
  - What are the specific tasks performed by each team member?
  - What actions have been taken to implement a safe environment within your organization?
  - What are the follow up actions when a team member is involved in an accident?
  - The SDS should be consulted for material specific handling and storage precautions.

## Workplace Controls

Work practice controls are meant to reduce the likelihood of exposure through regular refresher training, and reinforcing policies and procedures. Controls include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a complete and frequently updated listing of all hazardous chemicals used and making it readily available to all team members.
- Providing all team members that come into contact with any hazardous chemicals information on all hazardous chemicals, their effects, and appropriate handling techniques.
- Ensuring all hazardous chemicals used by the facility are clearly marked with hazard labels on both the primary container (from the manufacturer) and the secondary container (if the chemical is transferred to another container).

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- The facility must identify and evaluate workplace hazards from handling hazardous materials, and provide safety equipment, and personal protective equipment (PPE) per the SDS. This equipment could include:
  - Safety Equipment:
    - Emergency eyewash stations
    - General ventilation or local exhaust ventilation.
    - First Aid Kit
    - Spill Kit
  - PPE:
    - Eye protection
    - Chemical resistant gloves
    - Respiratory protection when needed
  - Team members must be trained how to correctly use all safety equipment and PPE.
  - All team members should know:
    - How to access and use a spill kit.
    - Location of the eye wash station and how to use it.
    - Where the contact information for the Poison Control Center and other relevant safety organizations is located.

## Resources

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3203.html>: Cal OSHA Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/5194.html> Cal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard

[http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh\\_publications/hazcom.pdf](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/hazcom.pdf)  
Guide to California Hazard Communication Regulation

<http://www.msds.com/> 3e Free SDS Search

## Questions for Discussion

### **Who has responsibility for implementing a hazardous material handling safety action plan?**

Management, staff, and a designated person in charge of safety.

### **How can I set up rules relating to hazardous material safe handling?**

Get information from the SDS and develop the Safe Work Practices section of the Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Please complete the Sign-In sheet.



# Handling Hazardous Materials in the Veterinary Setting

## Attendance Record

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Trainer \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

Signature

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The Employee Health & Safety exposures and loss prevention efforts are the responsibility of your company. Safehold services are intended to assist you and your management in evaluating potential exposures to loss and methods to minimize exposure. These services do not necessarily include every possible loss potential, code violation, or exception to good management practice.

# Handling Hazardous Materials in the Veterinary Setting

## Employee Handout

### Overview

There are numerous hazardous materials present in the veterinary workplace. They range from pharmaceuticals to cleaning and maintenance substances.

The first step in developing a hazardous materials handling program is to identify all potentially hazardous materials and chemicals in the facility. The list should be referred to often and frequently updated to reflect an accurate account of hazardous materials located within the facility.

A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each of the chemicals or hazardous substances on the list must be obtained and kept on the premises. The materials must be classified by the hazard level listed on the SDS.

Accurate and legible labeling of all materials with the product identifier and words, pictures, symbols, or combination thereof, which provide at least general information regarding the hazards of the chemical is required. Old labels that are faded or otherwise difficult to read should be replaced.

Examples of two types of labels that may be used are the NFPA 704, and HMIS labeling systems:



Cal OSHA's Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) also requires employers to establish, implement and maintain an effective IIPP with procedures for identifying and evaluating workplace hazards, including chemical hazards, and unsafe conditions, and to develop safe work practices for handling hazardous materials. Training must be provided when the IIPP is first established, to all new employees upon hiring, and whenever new substances, processes, procedures, or

equipment are introduced to the workplace and represent a new hazard.

### Steps and ideas to set up a safe workplace in terms of hazardous materials:

1. Know the hazards related to the materials you are working with.
2. Know where the Safety Data Sheets (SDS's) for the hazardous materials you work with are kept, how to access them, and review them periodically.
3. Know the safety precautions you should take.
4. Wear any personal protective devices that the SDS's require. Such as: gloves, goggles, uniforms, and even footwear.
5. All veterinary team members should know how to access and use a spill kit.
6. Hazardous material spills should be cleaned immediately.
7. An eye wash station should be present for chemicals or exposure to materials that could damage the eyes.
8. Know where the contact information for the Poison Control Center and other relevant safety organizations is located.

It is the responsibility of every member of the veterinary team to understand the hazards and controls associated with them.

Care and caution are the two biggest prevention factors for accidents associated with hazardous material handling. However, also important are training, and knowledge of what to do in case of an accident.

### **Material Handling in the Workplace**

- Only handle hazardous materials with the appropriate PPE. Examples of PPE are:
  - Disposable Gloves
  - Hearing Protection
  - Eye Protection
  - Proper Uniform
- Personnel should be trained to avoid hand contact with their eyes, face, mouth, or other body surfaces with contaminated gloves or hands.
- Smoking, eating, applying cosmetics, installing contact lenses and similar procedures are prohibited within the animal facility or in animal study areas except in designated areas that are free of potentially contaminated materials.
- Keeping a clean and safe working environment will greatly reduce the risk of disease spread or injury. All employee personnel must be effectively trained and comply with appropriate safety procedures.