

Emergency Preparedness – Spill Response*



Spill response is the process of handling and reporting accidental spills. Some spills, such as coffee spills, are quite simple to clean up: just grab some paper towel and wipe. These spills do not require reporting. However, major spills may release chemicals and may require the evacuation of the facility and neighbourhood. They may also require response measures by specially trained first responders.

Why is it important?

Spill response aims to prevent or minimize the potential harm to human health, the environment and/or property. Spilled coffee could lead to a slip and fall incident resulting in worker injury. A major spill can result in potential health hazards, such as respiratory issues or chemical burns. Spills can additionally damage equipment, contaminate products, and disrupt work processes. Addressing spills promptly and effectively is important for maintaining a safe and efficient work environment, complying with health and safety regulations, and protecting employees' well-being.

Key characteristics

Spill response can include the following items:

- Identifying potential spill hazards at your workplace and assigning a risk rating
- Preparing for a potential spill by developing a spill response plan that includes implementing spill response equipment in the facility, procedures, plus worker training and annual drills
- Reporting and responding to a spill in a safe and effective manner
- Disposal of waste material from the spill cleanup

- Repairing the item that caused the spill
- Incident investigation to find out the cause of the spill and make recommendations to prevent spills from occurring

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation section 5.97 to 5.102 and the *Workers Compensation Act* sections 68 to 72 outline many of the items listed above.

Preventive next steps

Prepare yourself for a potential spill in your workplace by:

- taking training offered by your employer
- learning your company's spill response procedures and practicing spill response in annual drills
- completing the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) education and training, especially learning how to locate and read a Safety Data Sheet (SDS)

When you come upon a spill, identify the hazards posed by the spill and respond to it by following your company's spill response procedures. Depending on a variety of factors, this may include reporting the incident to your supervisor and obtaining/reviewing the SDS before responding to the spill.

If trained, respond to the spill by:

- Obtaining the correct spill response kit for the material spilled
- Using the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) for the task
- Stopping the spill (e.g., shut off emergency valve), if safe to do so
- Preventing the spill from spreading by creating a dam and/or covering floor drains
- Applying the correct absorbent material to soak up the spill (e.g., spill pads, kitty litter, etc.)
- Disposing soaked absorbent material into appropriate plastic bags or drum
- Finishing the spill cleanup and following the correct procedure to dispose of this hazardous waste as outlined in the Emergency Response Plan
- Decontaminating, cleaning up and appropriately disposing of the contaminated PPE
- Participating, and cooperating with the incident investigation, if required



For additional resources visit:

[Chemical and Biological Agents](#) | WorkSafeBC

[Accident Reporting and Investigation](#) | WorkSafeBC

[Slips, Trips and Falls eLearning course](#) | Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC

Emergency Preparedness – Spill Response Toolbox Talk

Name of Facilitator: _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Employee feedback/questions/recommendations

[illegible]

Workers who attended

[illegible]

Key Talking Points (Facilitator Notes)