



# Know About Hazardous Chemicals

Hazardous chemicals are often used in the workplace, even in food service businesses. Cleaners, dishwashing chemicals, pesticides and refrigerants are all chemicals that can be hazardous. Health problems caused by exposure to certain chemicals and safety hazards such as fire and explosions are possible if the chemicals you work with aren't handled properly. It's essential to be aware of the hazardous chemicals in your workplace and to know how to handle them.

## Hazardous Materials Include:

- ◆ **toxic chemicals**—gases, liquids or solids that can cause illness or death
- ◆ **flammable liquids**—give off vapors that can form an explosive mixture with air
- ◆ **gases**—can be corrosive, combustible, flammable, explosive, poisonous or all of these
- ◆ **corrosives**—can destroy living tissue and other substances

## Ways You Can be Exposed

- ◆ **dermal**—direct contact with the skin
- ◆ **inhalation**—breathing gases, vapors, dusts or fumes
- ◆ **ingestion**—swallowing a chemical

## Health Problems Caused By Hazardous Materials Include:

- ◆ damage to lungs and respiratory system
- ◆ skin irritation, such as burns, rashes and dermatitis
- ◆ eye damage, even blindness
- ◆ nervous system damage
- ◆ cancer
- ◆ damage to the liver or other organs
- ◆ infertility
- ◆ birth defects

## Preventing Harm When Using Chemicals

- ◆ Know the substance you're handling.
- ◆ Use the proper personal protective equipment.
- ◆ Wash thoroughly after use.

- ◆ Obey all safety rules.
- ◆ Avoid mixing chemicals unless you're qualified to do so and you know how they'll react.
- ◆ Ventilate the area properly.

## Storage

- ◆ Store chemicals in approved ventilated safety cabinets, away from food, moisture, sunlight, heat sources and substances they can react with.
- ◆ Take only needed amounts to the work area.
- ◆ Carry and store chemicals only in approved, properly labeled safety containers.
- ◆ Dispose of chemicals and waste according to approved procedures (never down sewers or drains).