



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 60.03: Hazardous Material Spills

DATE: October 25, 2023

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish requirements for action in the event of a hazardous material spill.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in September of odd-numbered years by the Assistant Vice President for Environmental Health & Safety with substantive revisions forwarded through the Associate Vice President for Research (Responsible Research) to the Vice President for Research & Innovation.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. General Statement

Many chemicals classified as hazardous are used on campus each day; some are in small quantities, while others amount to thousands of gallons/pounds. To discharge any amount of these chemicals into the environment is a violation of state and federal law. Incarceration and/or fines of up to \$40,000 per occurrence, restitution for damages, and cost of cleanup are possible consequences for the responsible parties. Responsible parties include, but are not limited to, the university and individuals involved. A policy of zero discharge, release, or improper disposal is, therefore, mandatory. Since the types and quantities of hazardous materials are too numerous to be covered, this OP is directed at initial action and mandatory reporting procedures.

2. Definitions

- a. Containment – Control of the material to prevent spread until proper cleanup can be undertaken.
- b. Disposal – The proper disposition of the hazardous material after its use or cleanup. Only the university Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) office is authorized to dispose of hazardous material.
- c. *Emergency Response Guidebook* – Official guide published by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT P 5800.3) that gives recommended actions for spills of hazardous materials.
- d. Environment – Air, water, or land about us, including means of introduction such as sink and floor drains, sewers, ditches, gutters, and storm drains.
- e. Hazardous Material – Any substance in any form (solid, liquid, gaseous) that is identified as hazardous by label, *Emergency Response Guidebook*, or knowledge. Materials suspected of

being hazardous or whose hazardous properties are unknown must be treated as hazardous until evidence to the contrary is presented and verified.

- f. Safety Data Sheet (SDS) – SDS provided by the manufacturer or distributor for each hazardous material.
- g. Major Spill – The unplanned release of a hazardous material to the environment that poses potential harm.
- h. Minor Spill – The unplanned release of a hazardous material to the environment that is readily contained, easily cleaned up for proper disposal, and poses no threat.
- i. Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) – The State of Texas regulatory body empowered by the governor to enforce environmental regulations.
- j. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The federal regulatory body empowered to enforce environmental regulations.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each supervisor to ensure proper identification of hazards, training, availability of safety equipment, and handling and disposal of all hazardous materials in his or her assigned areas. Full compliance with regulations governing information and right-to-know of employees concerning SDSs is mandatory.

4. Containment Procedure

a. Minor Spill

In the event of a minor spill, only trained personnel shall undertake immediate cleanup and proper disposal. EHS shall be contacted prior to attempting any cleanup.

b. Major Spill

In the event of a major spill, an attempt to secure or prevent further spill should be made if it can be accomplished safely. At no time shall employees place themselves in danger by trying to contain a spill. EHS is trained and equipped to handle spills and shall be the initial contact for spill response. Notification is extremely critical and should be accomplished immediately. Using any means possible (dirt, rags, lumber, etc.), minimize the spread of the material, and prevent it from entering drains, sewers, or run-off ditches or gutters. Get additional help, but keep all personnel clear until responsible supervisory personnel are on the scene. Immediately notify EHS of the type of spill, location, quantity, and potential threat. In situations outside normal working hours, EHS can be contacted through the university Police Department or emergency maintenance.

5. Notification

In the event of an unauthorized release of a reportable quantity of a hazardous material to the environment, the TCEQ and EPA must be notified immediately by telephone, with a hard copy report submitted within 24 hours. The EHS Environmental Protection Manager is designated as the initiator of these reports, making it imperative that he/she be notified immediately of the spill.