

Chemical Do's and Don'ts

CLEANING AND SANITATION BEST PRACTICES



Adhering to usage best practices is crucial for preventing chemical-related injuries in the workplace. Here are several cleaning and sanitation product “Do’s and Don’ts” to help create a culture of safety in your establishment.



DO Read the Product Label

Make sure all employees read the product label. The product label contains a lot of information, and understanding what’s on it helps employees avoid workplace injuries and other safety hazards. The label will also include the manufacturer contact information so you can contact them with questions or concerns.

Here are some things to look for.

Safety Precautions

Cleaning and sanitation products are required to list precautions and hazards on the label. Always check for these precautions prior to using the product. Labels will include required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), First Aid procedures, and disposal precautions (if necessary).

Use Instructions

Cleaning and sanitation products are designed for specific purposes. Instructions will appear on the label and will include dilution instructions (if needed), kill claims, required contact times, and surface compatibility. Always use the product according to its label instructions.

Tip: Contact times are an often-overlooked aspect of these use instructions. The instructions will include the amount of time a surface should remain visibly wet in order to kill organisms.

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DO Use a Product Only for Its Intended Use

Cleaning and sanitation products are designed for specific uses. Using them incorrectly could result in damaged equipment or surfaces, or even worse, unnecessary exposure to employees and/or guests.

Here are some guidelines:

- Hard-surface products, such as cleaners, sanitizers, and disinfectants, are intended for use on inanimate surfaces only.
- Not all products are designed for use on food-contact surfaces, so review the product's label before using.
- Cleaning and sanitation products should never be used on skin or directly on food, which could cause unnecessary chemical exposure.
- If used in crowded settings, care should be taken to avoid accidental exposure to any employee or guest.



DO Use Personal Protective Equipment, If Required

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is designed to protect an individual from chemical exposures to skin, eyes, lungs, face, hands, feet, and other parts of the body.

PPE may include:

Goggles or eye shields to reduce eye damage resulting from splashing.

Chemical-resistant gloves, long-sleeved garments such as lab coats, and/or closed-toe shoes.

Respirators to prevent accidental inhalation.

Not all products require the same level of PPE, so always refer to the product label to understand what PPE is required during use.

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DON'T Mix Sanitation Products

Under no circumstances should multiple products be mixed. Not only will this negatively impact performance, but it's dangerous and could result in serious injury or even death. For example, mixing bleach-based solutions with vinegar or ammonia can generate chlorine and chloramine gases, which could result in severe lung tissue damage if inhaled.

Many people are unaware of the dangers of mixing chemicals, including an understanding that mixing bleach with vinegar is dangerous.¹

Make sure your team understands the dangers of mixing chemicals and the potential harm that can come from it.



DON'T Store Cleaning and Sanitation Products in an Unsafe Manner

It is important to follow chemical storage best practices to minimize risks. Failure to do so may result in violations during safety inspections, or worse, could result in accidental spilling, mixing, or exposure.

Ensure your team stores chemicals according to the following:

- Store products by chemical type and hazard class code (if applicable).
- Do not store products together if they would react if accidentally mixed.
- To avoid spills, never store products on the floor and do not store higher than eye level.
- Be sure all products are properly labeled with instructions, risks, and necessary safety precautions.
- Only store products in their appropriate containers and original packaging – never reuse empty containers to store other products or chemicals.