

Cleansing Workers

Safe Use of Chemicals



How do chemicals enter our body?

- Inhalation of chemical fumes or vapours through the respiratory tract into the body, particularly in poorly ventilated areas.
- Skin absorption if suitable gloves and protective clothing are not used. Chemicals could also hurt unprotected skin.
- Chemicals may be swallowed when eating or smoking with contaminated hands.



What are the health hazards of chemicals?

Different types of chemicals may cause different adverse health effects through acute (e.g. spillage) or prolonged exposure, as follows:



Eyes

- Burns
- Inflammation with reddening, swelling, tears



Nervous System

- Headache, dizziness, drowsiness, neuropathy



Respiratory System

- Irritation with coughing



Skin

- Burns
- Inflammation with reddening, itchiness, dryness, cracks



Other Organs

- Impaired liver and kidney functions

CAUTION

- Mixing chemicals can cause explosion or emission of toxic gas!
- Improper use or storage of flammable chemicals can cause explosion or fire!



How could we protect our health when handling chemicals?

- Avoid using hazardous chemicals whenever possible. If it is impracticable to do so, the least hazardous chemicals should be chosen.
- Use chemicals in well-ventilated areas only. Use ventilation equipment to remove airborne contaminants at source, if necessary.
- Fully understand the safety information and follow the necessary precautionary measures. Ensure you have received adequate training, information, instructions and supervision from employers.



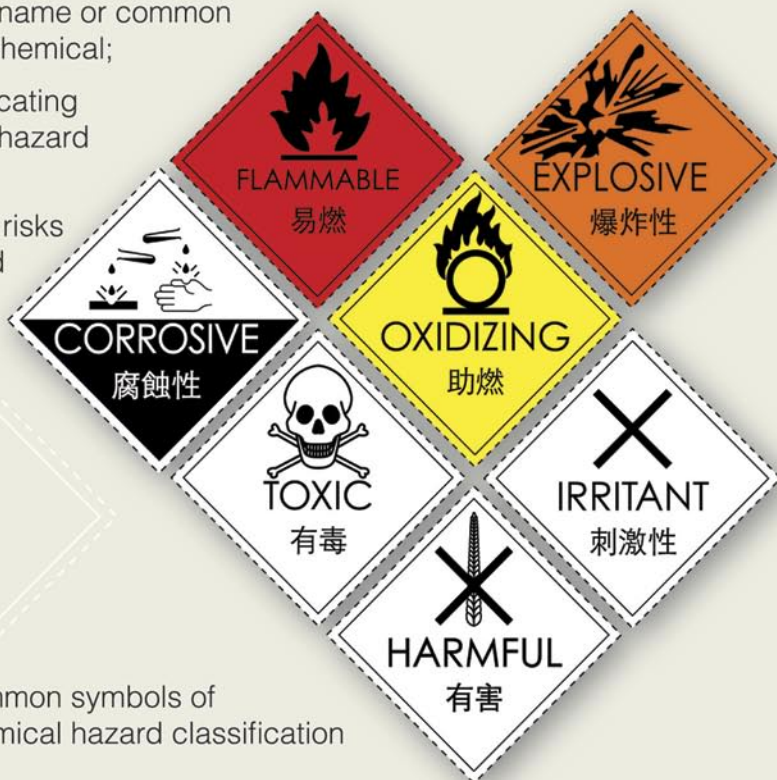
- Ensure all chemical containers have been securely affixed with suitable labels.
- Read the labels carefully to understand the contents thoroughly before using the chemicals. Follow the correct methods of use and safety instructions.



IRRITANT
刺激性

A chemical label should show:

- the chemical name or common name of the chemical;
- a symbol indicating the chemical hazard classification;
- the particular risks involved; and
- the safety precautions required.



The left side of the label contains a symbol indicating the hazard classification.

	次氯酸钠溶液 (含8%活性氯) Sodium Hypochlorite Solution (containing 8% active chlorine)
	危險情況 Particular Risks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 與酸接觸後即放出毒氣 Contact with acids liberates toxic gas 刺激眼睛及皮膚 Irritating to eyes and skin
	安全措施 Safety Precautions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 避免沾及眼睛 Avoid contact with eyes

The right side of the label contains information about the name of substance, particular risks and safety precautions.

A typical label of bleaching solution

Safety hints for handling chemicals



Don't mix cleansing chemicals

- **Wear suitable personal protective equipment.**

For example, gloves, rubber boots and aprons. If there is a risk of spillage or inhalation of chemicals, suitable face shield or eye protector and respirator should be used respectively.

- **Don't mix chemicals to increase their cleansing effectiveness.**

Mixing chemicals may cause explosion or emission of toxic gas. For example, mixing acid with bleaching solution will liberate toxic chlorine gas.





易燃

- **Cover all chemical containers securely.** This is important for preventing leakage or spillage due to accidental overturning of the containers.
- **Store incompatible chemicals separately.** For example, bleaching solution and stone washer must not be stored together.
- **Avoid storing excessive quantities of chemicals in the work area.**
- **Do not eat or smoke in areas where chemicals are used or stored.**
- **Wash hands, arms and face immediately after work or before eating.** This is important for preventing any chemicals residues from entering the body through the skin or swallowing.
- **Seek advice from supervisors if in doubt.**



OXIDIZING

助燃



CORROSIVE

腐蝕性

Enquiries

For enquiries about this pamphlet or advice on occupational health and hygiene matters, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department through:

Telephone : 2852 4041

Fax : 2581 2049

E-Mail : enquiry@labour.gov.hk

Information on the services offered by the Labour Department and on major labour legislation can also be found on our website <http://www.labour.gov.hk>.

Information on the services provided by the Occupational Safety and Health Council can be obtained through its hotline 2739 9000 and website <http://www.oshc.org.hk>.

Complaints

If you have any complaints about unsafe workplaces and practices, please call the Labour Department's Occupational Safety and Health complaint hotline, 2542 2172. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.