



HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL EMERGENCIES

Chemicals are a natural and important part of our environment. We use chemicals every day. Chemicals help keep our food fresh and our bodies clean. They help our plants grow and fuel our cars. And chemicals make it possible for us to live longer, healthier lives.

There are probably many hazardous materials that we use and store in our homes. Take a tour of your home to see where these materials are located. Use the list of common hazardous household items to guide you in your hunt. Once you have located a product, check the label and take the necessary steps to ensure that you are using, storing and disposing of the material according to the manufacturer's directions.

It is critical to store household chemicals in places where children cannot access them. Remember that products such as aerosol cans of hair spray and deodorant, nail polish and nail polish remover, toilet bowl cleaners and furniture polishes all fall into the category of hazardous materials.

COMMON HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

- **Cleaning Products**

| | | |
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| Oven cleaners | Drain cleaners | Wood cleaners and polishes |
| Metal cleaners and polishes | Toilet cleaners | Tub, tile, shower cleaners |
| Bleach (laundry) | Pool chemicals | |

- **Indoor Pesticides**

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|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ant sprays and baits | Cockroach sprays and baits | Flea repellents and shampoo |
| Bug sprays | Houseplant insecticides | Moth repellents |
| Mouse and rat poisons and baits | | |

- **Automotive Products**

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|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Motor oil | Fuel additives | Carburetor & fuel injection cleaners |
| Air conditioning refrigerants | Starter fluids | Automotive batteries |
| Transmission and brake fluid | Antifreeze | |

- **Workshop/Painting Supplies**

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| Adhesives and glues | Furniture strippers | Oil- or enamel-based paint |
| Stains and finishes | Paint thinners & turpentine | Paint strippers and removers |
| Photographic chemicals | Fixatives and other solvents | Linseed Oil |

- **Lawn and Garden Products**

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| Herbicides | Insecticides | Fungicides/wood preservatives |
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- **Miscellaneous**

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|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Batteries | Mercury thermostats | Mercury thermometers |
| Fluorescent light bulbs | Driveway sealer | |

- **Other Flammable Products**

| | | |
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| Propane tanks | Compressed gas cylinders | Kerosene |
| Home heating oil | Diesel fuel | Gas/oil mix |
| Lighter fluid | | |

1. Chemicals in Our Homes

Under certain conditions, chemicals can also be poisonous or have a harmful effect on your health. Some chemicals that are safe, and even helpful in small amounts, can be harmful in larger quantities or under certain conditions. In fact, accidental exposure to chemicals is the most common household chemical problem. And most chemical accidents in the home can be prevented.



There are three ways people become accidentally exposed to chemical agents in their home:

- a) Breathing the chemical***
- b) Swallowing contaminated food, water, or medication***
- c) Touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or things that have touched the chemical***

Remember, you may be exposed to chemicals even though you may not be able to see or smell anything unusual. You must be able to recognize the symptoms of toxic poisoning including:

- Difficulty breathing
- Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract
- Changes in skin color
- Headache or blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Cramps or diarrhea

2. Protect Your Family and Home from Household Chemical Emergency

Home chemical accidents can result from trying to improve the way a product works by adding one substance to another, not following directions for use of a product, or by improper storage or disposal of a chemical. Fortunately, a few simple precautions can help you avoid many chemical emergencies. The following are guidelines for buying and storing hazardous household chemicals safely:

- Buy only as much of a chemical as you think you will use. Leftover material can be shared with neighbors or donated to a business, charity or government agency. For example, excess pesticide could be offered to

a greenhouse or garden center and theater groups often need surplus paint. Some communities have organized waste exchanges where household hazardous chemicals and waste can be swapped or given away.

- Keep products containing hazardous materials in their original containers and never remove the labels unless the container is corroding. Corroding containers should be repackaged and clearly labeled.
- If you don't already have one, buy a fire extinguisher that is labeled for A, B, and C class fires and keep it handy.
- Never store hazardous products in food containers.
- Never mix household hazardous chemicals or waste with other products. Incompatibles, such as chlorine bleach and ammonia, may react, ignite or explode.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the proper use of the household chemical.
- Never smoke while using household chemicals.
- Never use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products, or pesticides near an open flame (e.g., pilot light, lighted candle, fireplace, wood burning stove, etc.) Although you may not be able to see or smell them, vapor particles in the air could catch fire or explode.
- Clean up any chemical spill immediately. Use rags to clean up the spill. Wear gloves and eye protection. Allow the fumes in the rags to evaporate outdoors, then dispose of the rags by wrapping them in a newspaper and placing them in a sealed plastic bag in your trash can.
- Dispose of hazardous materials correctly. Take household hazardous waste to a local collection program. Check with your county or state environmental or solid waste agency to learn if there is a household hazardous waste collection program in your area.
- Post the number of the emergency medical services and the poison control center by all telephones. In an emergency situation, you may not have time to look up critical phone numbers. The national poison control number is (800) 222-1222.



3. During A Household Chemical Emergency

There are many organizations available to assist the community in an emergency. The City of Long Beach Departments such as Police, Fire and Public Health, local organizations such as the American Red Cross, and other government agencies such as the California Poison Control Center.

Take the following actions:

- Get out of the residence immediately if there is a danger of fire or explosion. Do not waste time collecting items or calling the fire department when you are in danger. Call the fire department from outside (a cellular phone or a neighbor's phone) once you are safely away from danger.
- Stay upwind and away from the residence to avoid breathing toxic fumes.
- Recognize and respond to symptoms of toxic poisoning including:
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract
 - Changes in skin color
 - Headache or blurred vision
 - Dizziness
 - Clumsiness or lack of coordination
 - Cramps or diarrhea

- If someone is experiencing toxic poisoning symptoms or has been exposed to a household chemical, call the national poison control center at 1 (800) 222-1222 and find any containers of the substance that are readily available in order to provide requested information.
- Follow the emergency operator or dispatcher's first aid instructions carefully. The first aid advice found on containers may be out of date or inappropriate. Do not give anything by mouth unless advised to do so by a medical professional.



4. After a Household Chemical Emergency

Discard clothing, materials or items that may have been contaminated. Some chemicals may not wash off or out completely.

In Case of Poisoning

The most common home chemical emergencies involve small children eating medicines. Keep all medicines, cosmetics, cleaning products, and other household chemicals out of sight and out of reach of children. Experts in the field of chemical manufacturing suggest that doing so could eliminate up to 75 percent of all poisoning of small children.

If someone in your home does eat or drink a non-food substance, find the container it came out of immediately and take it with you to the phone. **Call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222), or Emergency Medical Services (EMS), or 9-1-1, or call the operator and tell them exactly what your child ingested.**

Follow their instructions carefully. Please be aware that the First Aid advice found on the container may not be appropriate. So, do not give anything by mouth until you have been advised by medical professionals.

For additional information, please visit any of the following on-line resources:

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

California Poison Control center

<http://www.calpoison.org>

Pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and poison information providers answer the calls to 1-800-222-1222, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Language interpreters are always available.

Social Media:

You can also sign up for any of the City of Long Beach social media accounts and receive updates on the City's disaster responses, as well as information to assist you.

www.facebook.com/CityofLongBeachCA

<https://twitter.com/LongBeachCity>

www.youtube.com/user/LongBeachCityCA

