

Clean-up Procedure for Spills of Common Chemicals in the Veterinary Practice

- 1- Keep unnecessary people and pets out of the area to prevent spreading the spilled material.
- 2- If the area is small or the fumes are extremely strong, increase ventilation by opening a window or turning on an exhaust fan. Do not use an electric exhaust fan or electric equipment and avoid turning switches on or off when cleaning up spilled flammable materials.
- 3- Put on a pair of protective latex or nitrile gloves. If it is likely that your clothing will become contaminated during the cleanup, put on a protective apron and protective eye wear.
- 4- As soon as possible, cover the spill with absorbent materials like paper towels or cat litter. Allow the absorbent to fully collect the liquid.
- 5- Using a broom, gently sweep the saturated absorbent into a dust pan and deposit it in a plastic trash bag.
- 6- When all the material has been picked up, seal the trash bag and dispose of it as regular waste unless your institution, city or county require otherwise.
- 7- Wash the contaminated area thoroughly with plain water or a detergent (not disinfectant) soap if not contraindicated by the spilled material's MSDS. Allow the area to air dry.
- 8- Remove any protective equipment used during the clean up. Dispose of single-use items as regular trash unless your institution, city or county require otherwise.
- 9- Wash your hands thoroughly and change any clothing that has become contaminated during the clean-up process.
- 10- Replace used materials in the spill kit.

Assembling a spill kit

The contents of a chemical spill kit are predominately determined by the chemicals present in the hospital and the expected severity of spills that are likely to occur. In most practices, a single spill kit can be assembled to cover the wide variety of chemicals present. By assembling the components in advance, the cleanup procedure is significantly expedited and that results in less exposure, less danger and the staff gets back to work faster.

There are special pre-packaged spill kits containing commercial absorbent pads (like the ones used for oil spills) and chemical inactivators that can be purchased, but in most practices a spill kit can be made from materials already in the practice.

A typical veterinary practice's chemical spill kit should include:

- **A plastic container to keep the materials together.** A Rubbermaid® or similar container (with a lid) large enough to contain about 5 gallons of material is suitable for most situations in a veterinary practice. Make sure the container is clearly labeled as a chemical spill kit; some practice even paint the container a "high visibility" color. This container can also be used as a waste receptacle for disposal of spilled materials that must be handled as hazardous waste.
- **Cat litter or other absorbent material.** About 3 gallons of absorbent is usually enough to clean up a spill of 1 gallon of liquid.
- **Two pairs of thick nitrile or latex gloves.**
- **At least one (preferably two) sets of protective eyewear** designed for chemical fume protection.
- **Four durable, disposable plastic trash bags** large enough to hold the entire amount of absorbent material in the kit plus material that may be contaminated when the spill happens.
- **A small "dust broom" and pan.**
- **Tape or ties to close the trash bags** after use.
- **A laminated copy of the spill clean-up procedures** for the chemicals used in the practice.

Remember to immediately replace any components of the spill kit that are consumed.

Find a suitable place to keep the assembled kit. Ideally it should be easily stored in an accessible location - meaning it can be found and used in a matter of less than a minute or two. Avoid keeping the spill kit "locked away" in the back of a cabinet or buried underneath other supplies.

Establish an inspection system to make sure the contents of the spill kit are checked. A monthly "content check" is most practical since other safety devices (like fire extinguishers and emergency lights) must also be checked on a monthly basis. ⚙



SafetyVet

1550 Athens Rd Calhoun, TN 37309-3035
(423) 336-1925 www.safetyvet.com Phil@safetyvet.com