Emergency Procedures for Spills and Leaks

What to do When Spills or Leaks Occur
Spilled solvent and solvent-contaminated water should never be allowed to drain off into sewers, any body of water or onto the ground. It is important to inspect and maintain your process equipment, holding tanks and spill control devices continually, and know what to do ahead of time if a spill or leak occurs. Be prepared by having proper protective equipment identified and available for personnel cleaning up any spills.

If you or a fellow employee experience symptoms of dizziness, “drunkenness” or eye irritation, or if breathing becomes difficult, leave the area immediately and seek fresh air. Call a physician and/or take the employee to an emergency medical facility. If a colleague stops breathing, perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and seek medical assistance immediately.

Procedure for Small Spills and Leaks
1. Have proper protective equipment available for personnel cleaning up the spill.
2. Contain the spill.
3. Stop the leak while using the proper protective equipment and ventilation.
4. Clean up small spills and leaks immediately using mops, rags, cloth, sawdust or compatible chemical binders such as bentonite, vermiculite or sawdust.
5. Place solvent-laden materials and/or binders in a covered, solvent-resistant metal container.
6. Arrange for proper waste disposal according to applicable laws and regulations.
7. Contact the supervisor, even for small spills and leaks.

Procedure for Large Spills
1. Evacuate the area and call for help immediately.
2. Ventilate the area.
3. Notify the supervisor.
4. Protect yourself. Do not approach the spill area without wearing self-contained, positive-pressure respiratory equipment and suitable protective clothing.
5. Contain the spill.
6. Block floor drains, if present, to prevent the spill from spreading further.
7. Pump spilled solvent into a solvent-resistant container. Close and label the container.
8. Absorb residual spilled solvent with compatible chemical binders such as bentonite, vermiculite or sawdust, and then transfer to a closed container for proper disposal.
9. Spills may have to be reported to the proper authorities if quantities exceed reportable volumes.

After a spill, if the product is reusable, refer to the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” section on page 17. The preferred method for disposing of chlorinated solvents and the materials used for cleanup is to send the waste, via an authorized waste hauler, to a licensed reclaimer or to a government approved incinerator. Perform repairs, and/or take corrective action to prevent recurrence.