



Chemical Management in Schools; Conducting a Chemical Inventory

A Series of Best Management Practices



Many chemicals typically found and used in schools are dangerous primarily because of their age and condition, as well as their toxic or reactive properties. School administrators should conduct a complete chemical inventory to keep on file as part of the school's chemical best management practices.

Chemicals to include on the inventory

Any chemical used in the building for cleaning, maintenance, operations (including chemistry, biology and art departments) and pest control should be listed on the inventory.

Materials Safety and Data Sheet (MSDS) requirements

Manufacturers must supply a material safety data sheet (MSDS) upon purchase or upon request. MSDS sheets are prepared by the manufacturer and contain information pertaining to the chemical's flammability, reactivity, health effects, incompatibilities, and government regulations for transportation and proper disposal. As required by law (RSA 277-A:4), a copy of each MSDS must be kept where chemicals are being stored and made easily available to employees who come in contact with them. MSDSs for all chemicals must also be given to local fire departments.

Benefits to conducting a chemical inventory

Eliminating unnecessary purchases will save the school money. Knowing where the chemicals are located will assist maintenance staff and the local fire department in the event of an emergency. Elimination of out-dated, unused and unnecessarily hazardous chemicals and containers can be replaced by safer earth-friendly ones.

Locations to file the chemical inventory

Chemical inventories should be kept in school offices or someplace central to all departments that use them. A copy should also go to your local fire department and the school building maintenance department.

Inventory maintenance

The most effective way to maintain your inventory is to update it **each time** changes occur. The inventory should be updated when new products are purchased, old items are purged, or annually.

Chemical Inventories, at a minimum, should include:

- Chemical name
- Manufacturer name
- Place where chemical is being stored (room, name, building)
- Date of purchase
- Amount of chemical purchased
- Amount of chemical currently in school
- Chemical incompatibilities



New Hampshire Pollution Prevention in Schools Project

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