



8 STEPS TO SPILL RESPONSE

Dealing with a spill can range from; straight forward and simple, to complex and dangerous but whatever sort of spill you encounter, you should always work to a “trained for” plan that minimises the risk to those responding, involved personnel and the environment.

No matter the types of liquids involved, no matter the scale of the incident there are steps that need to be followed to help manage the risk. In simple terms we want you to get from “Oh dear me” to debriefing over a “nice cup of tea” SAFELY.

The following may on the face of it appear to be very basic instructions, but if followed step by step each and every time you respond to a spill, no matter the size of that spill, they will help to reduce the risks of injury and reduce the impact the spill has on the environment.

AN 8 STEP GUIDE TO SPILL RESPONSE

STEP 1 - ASSESS

As soon as you encounter a spill and until it has been successfully dealt with, you must constantly assess the risk it poses to personnel, the environment and property.

SAFETY ALWAYS COMES FIRST

If safe to do so try and determine what the liquid is, the quantity involved and if there are any casualties, NEVER try to deal with a spill on your own; inform colleagues and wait until at least one other person is in attendance before dealing with the incident.

STEP 2 - PROTECT

Always wear the appropriate P.P.E. (Personal Protection Equipment) to allow you to safely respond to the spill. Check the S.D.S. (Safety Data Sheet) for any hazards associated with the liquid spilled and then dress accordingly.

IF IN DOUBT, ASSUME THE WORST AND WEAR THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF P.P.E.

STEP 3 - CONTAIN

By containing the spill, you buy time and reduce the area of contamination, lessening the impact the spill will have. Use absorbent socks and booms or physical barriers to provide fast, effective containment.

STEP 4 - STOP THE SPILL

Once the spill has been contained **STOP** the source of the spill; roll a drum damaged side up, turn a tap off, plug the hole in a container etc. and if appropriate decant any remaining liquid into a secondary container.

REMEMBER, NEVER STEP IN THE SPILL

STEP 5 - RE-ASSESS

After the spill has been contained and the source controlled, re-assess the entire situation before starting clean-up. Ensure that the spill is fully under control

STEP 6 - CLEAN-UP

This can be as simple as wiping up with sorbent pads, through to using additional sorbents and or a compatible "wet vac". Remember to treat all contaminated material as the liquid spilled and dispose of accordingly.

STEP 7 - DECONTAMINATION

Ensure all the personnel involved with the spill are fully decontaminated. The site of the spill, all P.P.E. & equipment must also be fully decontaminated and checked. If items have been damaged or cannot be fully decontaminated, dispose of accordingly and replace with new.

STEP 8 - REPORT & REPLENISH

De-brief all personnel involved, compile a complete report of the incident and fill out all associated paperwork. If needs be, change your procedures and/or the location of some or all of your spill response equipment. Remember to replenish/re-stock all front line equipment and back-up stocks including P.P.E., drain covers etc.

LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE, YOU WILL BE BETTER PREPARED SHOULD THERE BE A NEXT TIME

It goes without saying that staff training is paramount, they need to be familiar with the layout of the site, the equipment they will be using and how to use it safely and effectively.

Hopefully any incident will be a rare occurrence and the only time your staff need to respond to a spill is during regular refresher training, which should be programmed in, in the same way as any other training such as first aid, or fire extinguisher use is.