



Moving Hazardous Chemicals to Another Lab

VEHS Fact Sheet

Vanderbilt Environmental Health and Safety

Telephone: 322-2057 Fax: 343-4951 After hours pager: 835-4965

www.safety.vanderbilt.edu

ADMINISTRATIVE/GENERAL

Moving Policy: Do not work alone. Never transport hazardous materials by yourself.

Moving Hours: Package and move Hazardous Chemicals only during normal business hours (Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm) so support staff will be available to help if there is a spill or accident.

Transportation Routes: Never move open containers of hazardous materials in elevators. Do not leave hazardous materials or other items in the corridors during moving. This is a violation of the fire code.

Transportation Equipment: If the move is within a building or to a connected adjacent building, use a good hand-truck, dolly or a cart designed for this purpose whenever possible. VEHS has some equipment available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact your Lab Compliance Coordinator for availability. For longer moves contact VEHS at 322-2057 for assistance.

Transportation Vehicle: You may not transport hazardous materials in private vehicles.

Personal Protective Equipment: Wear appropriate personal protection for the materials being handled (safety glasses or goggles, lab coat, gloves, closed-toe shoes, etc.) (*NOTE: There is an extra danger in sloshing and breakage during the move of hazardous chemicals.)

Accident Prevention: Have boxes, plastic bags, and containers for broken glass, ready and available before you begin. (*REVIEW QUICK FACTS*)

Spill Response: Ensure that you have immediate access to adequate and proper materials for cleanup of a spill at any point during the move. The spill guidelines should always be observed. (*REVIEW QUICK FACTS*)

Vacated Lab: Revisit your old lab space. Have any materials been left? Are any hazardous materials or unknowns left in your old lab? (Refer to “Preparing to Vacate Your Lab” fact sheet.)

VEHS Quick Facts:

DO NOT Attempt to Clean Up a Spill Without Assistance from VEHS if:

- You are unsure how to proceed.
- You feel it may be unsafe to do so. Don't take chances and jeopardize your health and the health of those around you.
- You do not know the identity of the spilled material.
- You do not have adequate or proper materials for cleanup.
- The spill is in an area, which precludes easy access to the spilled material (i.e., on shelves with other materials).
- You feel any physical symptoms of exposure.
- If you have any hesitations, contact VEHS (322-2057)

If You Cannot Clean Up the Spill for any of these Reasons, then:

- Isolate the spill. Notify others of the spill.
- Evacuate the area. Close doors if the spill occurs within the laboratory. If the spill occurs within the hallway, quickly notify personnel in nearby rooms. Air movement in laboratory buildings is usually from the corridor to the labs.
- If the spill occurs outdoors while transporting chemicals, remain upwind. Warn people away from the spill and alert them not to walk downwind. Have one person remain with the spill to alert passerby of the hazard while assistance is sought from VEHS (322-2057)
- Notify VEHS immediately. Call from a safe location (i.e., not in the lab or room where the spill occurred). Call VEHS.

If someone has been splashed with the chemical, begin flushing the contaminated area immediately with water. Continue to flush the affected area for 15 minutes. Seek medical attention if a possible health concern exists. If possible, bring a Materials Safety Data Sheet or call ahead to the emergency room to facilitate prompt and correct treatment of the injury.

CHEMICAL

Transporting Smelly Chemicals: Special packaging precautions should be exercised in transporting smelly chemicals (i.e., mercaptans, etc.). Containers with this type of material should be in sealed and double contained to prevent spreading odors in corridors and elevators during transportation. If the outside of a chemical container is contaminated with odoriferous residues, a wiping down with bleach will often eliminate the problem.

Transporting Highly Toxic Chemicals: Special packaging precautions should be exercised in transporting highly toxic chemicals. If there is evidence of residue on the outside of a container, consideration should be made on whether the materials is kept or sent out as hazardous waste. If the material is to be kept for use in the new laboratory, the container should be wiped down. The wipe down material must then be disposed of as hazardous waste.

Transport of Cylinders: It is anticipated that commercial movers or VU's company suppliers will relocate compressed gas cylinders. However, if you must move these types of cylinders within your laboratory follow the following guidelines:

- NEVER MOVE A CYLINDER WITH A REGULATOR IN PLACE!
- Only move cylinders with a hand-truck or dolly designated for that purpose.
- Make sure the valve cap is securely in place before moving any cylinder.
- Secure the label with packaging tape to prevent it from falling off.
- Never move a cylinder by rolling it across the floor.
- Never drop cylinders or bang them against each other or another object.
- Report all suspected leaks immediately—if the material in the tank is highly toxic, evacuate everyone from the area.
- Leaking bottles should be put in the fume hood, if possible.
- Do not leave a cylinder unstrapped in the laboratory
- If possible, hazardous compressed gas cylinders and flammable compressed gas cylinders should be stored /contained in ventilated storage cabinets or areas.

Chemical Storage Refrigerators: Chemical storage refrigerators must be completely dry prior to moving them; otherwise transportation will result in a trail of possibly contaminated water leaking from the refrigerator. Bleach can be used to help deodorize the surfaces of a refrigerator. Wear gloves while applying bleach solutions.

ERGONOMIC

Strains and Sprains Prevention: Although you personally may not be moving your lab contents, you will be packing boxes, moving items out of your way, and stretching over and around objects.

- Get as close to the object as possible to prevent excess back strain. Even a light object lifted at arm's length can strain your neck and back, particularly if it is done repeatedly.
- Twisting when reaching, lifting, or depositing an object is the main cause of back injuries. Face the object squarely, whether it is a book on a shelf, a reagent bottle, or glassware.
- NEVER USE A CHAIR, DESK, OR OTHER PIECE OF FURNITURE AS A LADDER TO REACH OBJECTS ABOVE SHOULDER LEVEL.
- Use an approved stepladder to bring high objects down below shoulder height. Ask for help to safely hand down the object.
- If you must reach for an object in front of you, support your upper body weight by leaning on a desk or table. If possible, move the obstruction out of your way or ask for help.
- Lift with your leg muscles, not your back. For light objects below waist level, you can counterbalance rather than squat.
- **If it is too heavy to move alone, get some help!**

Spill Guidelines

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