



GENERIC SPILL RESPONSE PROCEDURE

Many of the basic steps involved in cleaning up emergency and non-emergency spills and leaks are similar. The primary difference is the type & degree of hazard, location of the spill, level of training, and types of personal protective equipment necessary to clean up the spill safely. Even non-emergency spills and leaks take knowledge and training to clean up safely. This can be done as part of standard program developed to ensure your company's compliance with State WorkCover and State/Federal environmental protection obligations.

The following is a generic procedure which can be applied to essentially any type of liquid spill clean-up in the workplace. As with all spills, know what you are dealing with, and only respond if you have been suitably trained, have the required materials on hand, and are wearing appropriate protective equipment.

ASSESS THE SITUATION	1	Get away.	The first person to notice the spill or leak, should get away from the immediate area in order to evaluate the situation without exposing themselves to any danger. Obviously, this might not be needed if the nature of the spill is known and is minor.
	2	Identify the spill to the greatest extent possible.	Do so without being at risk. This includes identifying: a) the type of material spilled; b) the size of the spill and whether the leak has stopped; c) whether two potentially incompatible chemicals; and d) any unusual features such as foaming, odour, fire, etc.
	3	Is this an emergency?	Leaks that can be cleaned up by personnel on the spot or by maintenance personnel are not usually emergencies. Often what determines an emergency has been defined in the Emergency Response Plan and incorporated into spill response training. If this is not clear, or someone has been seriously injured, consider it an emergency.
	4	Get help for all but very minor spills.	When reporting a spill, do not leave the spill unattended. Establish a hazard zone that will keep non-emergency response personnel well out of danger. In emergency situations, the amount of training determines the degree of participation in the cleanup.
	5	Identify the spilled material.	Is it flammable, combustible, toxic and volatile, toxic or corrosive and non-volatile, or an oxidizing agent? The label and Material Safety Data Sheet for the product should give information on safe cleanup.
	6	Plan how to clean up the spill.	Procedures for common types of spills and leaks should be part of the Emergency Response Plan and training. Consider variables such as rain and wind.
	7	Obtain proper spill control materials.	This would include spill control materials such as sorbents, containment socks, spark proof tools (for flammable liquids), booms, neutralising fluids, etc.
	8	Put on appropriate PPE.	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can include respirators, gloves, goggles, etc., as needed.
	9	Stop the source of the spill or leak.	This can include turning off the valve, patching a leaky hose, draining a tank, or up righting a knocked over container of liquid.
	10	Stop the spill from spreading.	This can include use of appropriate absorbent/containment materials such as socks (land) and booms (water), shutting down ventilation systems to keep gases and vapours from spreading, and plugging drains to prevent contamination of the water supply.
	11	Use appropriate sorbents & equipment.	Remember, particulate sorbents are primarily suited for cleaning up small spills and the residues left over after a large spill. Absorbent pads can be used to collect the bulk liquid first. Watch out for free liquid as pads will tend to over-saturate.
	12	Dispose of contaminated materials properly.	Contaminated spill control materials and disposable personal protective clothing may have to be disposed of as hazardous waste. Contaminated tools and non-disposable PPE should be safely decontaminated and stored in clean plastic bags for future use.
EVALUATE	13	File an incident report.	The incident report should be filed with the person responsible for EHS in the organization, for every spill, including non-emergency (incidental) spills. Evaluate your plan to determine if changes are required. Replenish all supplies.

For more information refer to: the following documents (1) SAA/SNZ HB76:1997 Dangerous Goods - Initial Emergency Response Guide, (2) Storage and Handling of Workplace Dangerous Goods, National Code of Practice [NOHSC:2017(2001)].