



Safety Bulletin: Chemicals at School

December 2025

Attention: Site Administrators, Custodial Staff, Science Teachers

The improper storage of chemicals on a school campus is one of the most common findings during a SIA safety inspection. All schools have cleaning supplies, pesticides, science chemicals, art supplies, and other materials that must be handled with caution. Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations and the California Department of Education provide guidance for chemicals on a school site.

Review your district procedures and consider the following:

- Only district approved chemicals should be on site. Site administration should be consulted before any other chemicals are purchased.
- Provide a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical on campus. The SDS provides information on proper usage, storage, and essential emergency information. All staff should have access to the SDS. If teachers or other staff bring in chemicals from home, they must obtain an SDS from the manufacturer's website. An SDS is required for every brand and scent, and it must be kept where the chemical is stored.
- Ensure all documents and binders are updated to SDS. MSDS are no longer valid as of 2015 and should be filed as historical documents.
- Ensure all chemicals are properly labeled. Secondary containers must include content labeling. Simply writing "cleaner" on the bottle is not enough.
- Personal protective equipment (gloves, goggles, masks) should be available and used by all staff managing the chemicals.
- Conduct annual inspections and inventory of classrooms, janitorial closets, science chemical storage rooms, and cabinets. Unused or expired chemicals should be removed or disposed of properly.
- Hazardous chemicals must be stored in designated, well-ventilated areas and not accessible to students. Incompatible chemicals must be separated (e.g., acids away from bases, flammables away from oxidizers). Secondary containment is preferred.
- Inspect and test emergency equipment (e.g., eye-wash stations, safety showers), fume hoods, and ventilation systems/exhaust fans at least once a year.
- Plug-in air fresheners are not recommended, as they can pose a fire hazard. Check your district policy and/or the most recent fire inspection report, as they may not be permitted. Air fresheners may also trigger breathing issues for students and others in the vicinity.
- Per the Healthy Schools Act (HSA), ensure your certificated staff (i.e., teachers) are trained on Basic Integrated Pest Management for the classroom environment. Lysol wipes, disinfectants, etc. are considered pesticides in a school environment. Classes are available on Public School Works, Course Number M-991.

