



How to Use Chemicals Safely

In the era of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), your organization or your household may be using stronger chemicals for disinfecting surfaces. This fact sheet reminds you how to use chemicals safely and compliantly.

Workplace Tips



Ensure Easy SDS Access

Make sure anyone working with hazardous chemicals can easily find and understand Safety Data Sheets (SDSs).



Use Labels

Label all secondary containers with necessary product, supplier, hazard, and precautionary information.



Wear the Right PPE

Always inspect and wear required or SDS-recommended personal protective equipment when handling chemicals.



Provide Training + Maintain Inventory

Account for hazard communication training and keep your chemical inventory updated.

Sanitize? Clean? Disinfect?



SANITIZE

Reduce germs.

If soap and water are not available, using a sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can lower the number of germs to safer levels.



CLEAN

Remove germs.

Cleaning physically removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces and it lowers the risk of spreading infection.



DISINFECT

Kill germs.

Disinfectants use chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. The EPA has a list of disinfectants that meet its criteria for use against COVID-19.

These three terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they mean different things. You'll need a combination of all three to control the spread of germs.

Household Tips



Use Original Containers

Keep chemical products in their original bottles or containers. Do not use food containers to store chemical products.



Never Mix Products

Never mix household products together. For example, mixing bleach and ammonia produces toxic gases.



Always Read the Label

Always read the label before using a product that may be poisonous.



Ventilation + Protective Clothing

Open windows and wear protective clothing (gloves, long sleeves, long pants, shoes) if you use chemicals.