

PROCURING CHEMICALS INFOSHEET

THE HARD FACTS

- Chemicals can be harmful to our health and dangerous if not stored or used properly.
- Some chemicals are more hazardous than others.
- Generally, increased volume means increased risk.
- It doesn't matter how a chemical is procured, e.g. purchased, borrowed or otherwise acquired, we still need to manage the risk.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

- Understand the hazards before introducing a new chemical to your workplace.
- Make sure you are prepared to store and use the chemical safely.

PROCUREMENT 101

Always

- Consider safer alternatives, e.g. substitution with a less hazardous chemical.
- Order small pack sizes to avoid unnecessary handling and potential wastage.
- Purchase the lowest concentrations required.
- Keep overall storage volumes to a minimum, to match short-term demand.

Never

- Buy in bulk to save money.
- Accept chemicals from another organisation that is trying to get rid of them.



LEAVE A GOOD LEGACY

Your legacy should be great research not old disused chemicals. Every time a chemical is purchased and not used we create an operational, financial and environmental problem.

Legacy chemicals ...

- Take up precious work and storage space.
- Increase the hazard load of our laboratories and buildings.
- Cost a small fortune to dispose.
- Are no good for the environment (even when disposed of responsibly).



Only purchase what you need

If you only need 100g for 6 month work, only buy a 100g pack, even if the 500g pack appears to be less expensive.

BE PREPARED

The first step to being prepared is to read the Safety Data Sheet (SDS). To help make sure that you're prepared to store and use the chemical, ask yourself the following questions.

Do you have somewhere to store the chemical safely?

Consider:

- General space requirements
- Chemical incompatibilities
- Chemical stability, e.g. age, temperature, exposure to heat or light
- Other specific storage requirements, e.g. exclusion from ignition sources.



Do you need specific handling facilities?

You may require access to a fume cupboard or another type of local area ventilation to prevent exposure by inhalation.

In some circumstances a segregated work area or special personal protective equipment may be required.

Are you prepared to respond to a chemical spill or a medical emergency resulting from exposure to the chemical?

Check if your current spill kit and procedures are suitable for spills of this specific chemical. Also consider the chemical volumes/quantities that you plan to use.

Check the SDS for any specific first aid requirements. In some cases, very specific first aid procedures need to be followed.

Do you or your team require any special training?

Specific training is warranted for work with some specific high risk chemicals, but in most cases a risk assessment will need to be carried out first.

If the risk assessment requires the application of administrative risk controls a safe work procedure (SWP) will also need to be developed. The staff and students carrying out the work will need to be trained in the SWP.



MEET THE REGULATOR

Some chemicals require the approval of a regulator prior to procurement. Others have specific storage and usage requirements that must be met.

You must have the approval of the relevant Head of School and SafeWork NSW prior to procuring a **restricted or prohibited carcinogen**.

Other regulated chemicals include, but are not limited to:

- **Scheduled 4, 7 and 8 poisons**
- **Drug precursors**
- **Chemicals of security concern.**

In many cases, the supplier will ask you to complete an **End User Agreement (EUD)** to verify that the chemical being supplied will be used for scientific research purposes.



SafeWork NSW



Health

THE IMPORTANCE OF SDS

If you haven't read the safety data sheet (SDS) yet, you better do it now!

- Chemical suppliers are required by law to provide you with access to a current SDS for any hazardous chemical they supply to you.
- The SDS is a key source of information about a specific chemical.
- The SDS must be readily accessible to the workers who could be exposed to the chemical.



WHEN THE CHEMICAL ARRIVES

- **Check it is labelled correctly** - all containers should now be supplied with GHS compliant labels.
- **Write date of receipt on the container** - many chemicals can degrade over time. Dating the container can help to manage the disposal of old stock.
- **Store the chemical appropriately** – remember some chemicals have special storage requirements and can be quite dangerous if not stored properly.

