

# Glutaraldehyde- Model Spillage Procedure

See also Guidance Note 0106



All departments using glutaraldehyde must have a spillage procedure. This model is intended to be modified to suit local circumstances. It is envisaged that it could be used for other aldehyde disinfectants with little modification.

The head of department must inform all relevant staff of the procedure, ensure that those with responsibility to deal with spillages are trained in the use of the protective equipment and spillage kit, and that periodic emergency drills are undertaken.

This procedure relates to significant spillages: spillages should be deemed significant unless they consist only of drips from disinfected equipment or of quantities which may be dealt with immediately without producing a noticeable smell of glutaraldehyde. For example, if 50mls is spilled on the floor, it could normally be mopped up very rapidly using paper towels without causing a strong smell of glutaraldehyde. The towels should nevertheless be tied up in a polythene bag after use and disposed of with the clinical waste. Note, for a significant spill, the saturated absorbent material should be treated as hazardous chemical waste, not clinical waste.

## Equipment

Spillage kit kept .....  
(give exact location, close to, but outside area where glutaraldehyde is used)

Kit includes: absorbent material calculated to cope with the largest foreseeable spill (available from safety equipment suppliers); heavy duty nitrile gloves; impermeable apron; gas-tight goggles; ori-nasal (half-) mask with A1 (organic vapour) filter (available from safety equipment suppliers). Alternatively, a full-face respirator could be used; the added vapour protection is not needed but the face seal is perhaps more reliable in staff not accustomed to wearing respiratory protection and eye protection is built in. Choose a supplier who will provide training support, video, posters, etc

## Nominated Persons (To be fit-tested and trained in use of respirators).

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## Training, Maintenance and Record Keeping

The protection provided by respirators depends on systematic training and maintenance. Nominated persons must be fit-tested to ensure the chosen respirator fits adequately (consult health and safety adviser) and trained in its correct use. It is recommended that training be refreshed annually. Spillages are unlikely to be common occurrences. It is recommended that practice exercises are held annually to ensure the procedure operates according to expectations and that relevant staff are familiar with their responsibilities.

Periodic examination and, where appropriate, testing is also necessary for non-disposable respirators. It should be carried out according to manufacturer's instructions and to comply with COSHH Regulation 9.

Records should be kept of maintenance checks and of training provision. COSHH Regulation 9 requires that maintenance records should be kept for 5 years.

# 1 Procedure for significant spillage

- 1 Person in charge asks all non-essential personnel to leave the room until the spillage has been dealt with. Close the door if required to prevent escape of vapour.
- 2 Nominated person puts on protective clothing provided: nitrile gloves, apron, goggles, respirator.
- 3 Nominated person checks extract ventilation is on maximum (or opens all windows).
- 4 Nominated person mops up spillage with absorbent material.
- 5 If spill gets out of control, contain so far as possible; person in charge calls Fire Brigade. (NB send a copy of your procedure to the Brigade for comment and agreement now.)
- 6 Nominated person disposes of contaminated absorbent pads in waste bags securely sealed at the neck to prevent leaks and labelled as hazardous waste. Note, this is not domestic waste.
- 7 Nominated person cleans affected area with hot water and detergent to remove traces of glutaraldehyde which would otherwise cling to the surface, producing a persistent smell.
- 8 Person in charge investigates incident (to understand causes and prevent recurrence) and completes incident report.
- 9 Person in charge informs Estates Department if spillage was due to a leak from equipment.
- 10 If a significant odour of glutaraldehyde persists afterwards, seek the advice of the occupational hygienist or health and safety adviser. The absence of a distinctive smell indicates the room may be occupied normally.

If any member of staff experiences symptoms of irritation of respiratory tract, eyes or skin, refer to the Occupational Health Service, telephone .....

# 2 Procedure for spillage contained within catchment tray of disinfecter

Some units such as AFOS disinfectors have a containment tray built into the base of the unit to prevent liquid spreading over the floor in the event of a leak.

- 1 Person in charge asks all non-essential personnel to leave the room until the spillage has been dealt with.
- 2 Nominated Person puts on protective clothing provided: nitrile gloves, apron, goggles, respirator.
- 3 Nominated person checks extract ventilation is on maximum (or opens all windows).
- 4 Nominated Person opens valve to drain and allow spillage to run to drain. During this time check that drain line has no leaks.
- 5 Nominated Person flushes out catchment tray 3 times with clean water allowing water to run to drain. After final rinse, dry out remaining liquid with paper towels.
- 6 Nominated person disposes of contaminated absorbent pads in waste bags securely sealed at the neck to prevent leaks and labelled as hazardous waste. Note, this is not domestic waste.
- 7 Person in charge investigates, completes incident report form and informs Estates Department.
- 8 If a distinct odour of glutaraldehyde persists afterwards, seek the advice of the occupational hygienist or health and safety adviser. The absence of a distinct smell is an indication that the room may be occupied.

If any member of staff experiences symptoms of irritation of respiratory tract, eyes or skin, refer to the Occupational Health Service, telephone .....

# Respirator Maintenance (glutaraldehyde)

Respirators to be used by trained Nominated Persons who have been fit-tested for the model provided.  
Respirator to be fitted with a filter, type A2 (or type A1 for half masks). Filters have a limited shelf life; order new stock when within three months of expiry; replace filter after every use.

Type .....  
Model .....  
Manufacturer .....

The respirator must be thoroughly examined and maintained following manufacturer’s instructions by Nominated Person after each use and at intervals not exceeding 3 months.

## Record of Examination

| Date | Details of Examination and Comments on Condition | Signature |
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*Guidance note 0206, June 2006: by practitioners in the field to assist in assessing and controlling risks.  
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