



This document is one section from EPA's "Chemical Management Resource Guide for School Administrators," published in December 2006. The reference number is EPA-747-R-06-002. You can find the entire document at <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/chemmgmt/index.htm>.

Chemical Management Resource Guide for School Administrators

Section V Conclusion

V. Conclusion

Chemicals are used daily in both the maintenance of schools and the curriculum taught. They help students to perform experiments and learn new skills, among other benefits. They are important to many aspects of school maintenance. In the absence of chemicals, schools would lack certain fundamental tools needed to educate students. Despite their useful purposes, chemicals can be dangerous to students and staff when managed improperly. Some chemicals that are persistent in the environment and bioaccumulate through the food chain can make exposure during childhood and adolescence especially dangerous. Ensuring that chemicals are properly managed will help school administrators to safeguard the health and safety of students and school employees; avoid disposal expenses and school closures associated with spills and emergency incidents; maintain a sense of trust between the district and the surrounding community; and prevent unintended discharges and spills which inflict damage upon the environment.

Consistent policies and practices are recommended in all school systems:

- Appoint responsible leadership and institute “team training” regarding best practices of chemical and product management.
- Support chemical management effort with appropriate budget.

- Share your experiences with other districts and administrators.
- Purchase safer alternatives to hazardous substances.
- Adopt policies encouraging proper purchasing, labeling, storage, and disposal of chemicals and products.
- Train faculty and staff (and students, as applicable) on the potential dangers posed by chemicals and on alternatives that are less hazardous that may be available.
- Disseminate information on reducing the quantity and hazards of hazardous chemicals and products.

When implemented effectively, chemical management promotes awareness about the range of chemicals and products used in schools and creates a healthier and safer atmosphere for school occupants and the surrounding environment. For additional information, contact your EPA Regional Office or consult on-line resources to understand environmental health issues in schools, such as EPA’s SC3 and EPA’s HealthySEAT. The ultimate purpose of the SC3 is to reduce chemical exposures and improve chemical management in K-12 schools, while HealthySEAT can be customized to assist school districts in the evaluation and management of all of their environmental, safety, and health issues, including all aspects of their chemical management programs.



Check It Out

EPA Resources for Additional Information

Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign (SC3), <http://www.epa.gov/sc3/>
Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool (HealthySEAT), <http://epa.gov/schools/healthyseat/>