Placer County Contractors Association & Builders Exchange

PCCA

# WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

## Ammonia Safety

COMPANY NAME | JOB NAME | DATE

Ammonia is a commonly used chemical in commercial and household cleaners. In industry, ammonia is used in petroleum refining, to manufacture pharmaceuticals, to disinfect water, and as a refrigerant. In agriculture, ammonia can be used for crop processing, fertilizers, or as an anti-fungal treatment for citrus. Ammonia can also be produced naturally when stored materials such as manure, compost, or other materials break down.

Ammonia can be mixed with water and sold as ammonium hydroxide, or used in compressed gas as anhydrous ammonia (meaning without water). Workers in all industries should know that, despite its common usage, ammonia poses health risks and hazards that require proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe use and handling procedures.

The reason ammonia is considered a hazardous chemical is that it is corrosive to the skin, eyes, and lungs. Ammonia has a distinct and irritating odor when it is released, so your nose is usually the first warning of exposure. If you breathe ammonia into your lungs, you may cough, wheeze, or feel shortness of breath.

To prevent overexposure to ammonia, know the amounts, concentrations, and properties of the materials that you work with. Store ammonia in a cool, dry area away from incompatible materials such as chlorine, acids, oxidizers, and metals. Use ammonia products and materials in well-ventilated areas. Never mix ammonia with chlorine (bleach) because the combination creates chloramines, an extremely toxic and irritating gas. Wear the appropriate PPE for the job task and the strength of the ammonia you use.

Wear an air-supplying respirator if you will be entering an area that has high ammonia concentrations. If your workplace stores large amounts of ammonia, make sure that “escape” respirators with supplied air are available to you in case of an accidental release. Know where these respirators are located and how to use them. Inspect and maintain ammonia storage and processing equipment to prevent leaks and exposures.

Swallowing ammonia can cause burns to the mouth, throat, and stomach and can be fatal. Always wash your hands after using ammonia products and before you smoke, eat or drink. Do not store food and beverages near ammonia products.

Skin contact with ammonia can cause redness, pain, irritation, and burns. For housekeeping purposes, wear gloves to protect your skin when using ammonia cleaning products. When using higher concentrations in industrial and laboratory settings, wear gloves and consider a lab coat or coverall with long sleeves to protect your skin. If your clothes are splashed with ammonia, remove the contaminated clothing and flush your skin with water for at least 15 minutes.

An ammonia splash in the eye can cause pain and burns and lead to eye damage and temporary or permanent blindness. If you work with household cleaners, always spray the materials down and away from your face to avoid exposure. If you use or mix concentrated ammonia, wear splash goggles or consider a face shield to protect your eyes. If your eyes are exposed, flush them with water for 15 minutes and get immediate medical attention.

**Meeting Attended By:** _____ _____

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***Supervisor’s Signature :*** _____ ***Date:*** _____

**Special Topics For Your Project**

**Employee Safety Recommendations**

**Reviewed MSDS#** **Subject**

## Notes: