

Food Safety Fact Sheet

Storing and Using Chemicals

INTRODUCTION

Chemicals are used in school nutrition programs for a variety of cleaning and sanitizing functions. School nutrition employees must use and store these chemicals properly to minimize the risk of food contamination.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

Chemical hazard is one of the three major types of hazards in a school nutrition program. A foodborne illness can result from a harmful chemical getting into a food that is eaten by a person.

APPLICATION

Follow safe practices for handling chemicals.

- Know where the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are stored for any chemical that you handle. The SDS are provided by the manufacturer. The SDS provides information on how to use the chemical and what to do if someone is exposed to inappropriate quantities of the chemical.
- Follow the manufacturer's directions for mixing, storing, and first aid instructions on the chemical containers or on the SDS.
- Store all chemicals in a designated secured area away from food and food contact surfaces using spacing or partitioning.
- Limit access to chemicals by use of locks, seals, or key cards.
- Maintain a perpetual inventory of chemicals.
- Store only chemicals that are necessary to the operation and maintenance of the kitchen.
- Mix, test, and use sanitizing solutions as recommended by the manufacturer and the state or local health department.
- Use the appropriate chemical test kit to measure the concentration of sanitizer each time a new batch is mixed.
- Use chemical containers only for storing the original chemical that came in the container and not for storing any food or water.
- Use only hand antiseptics, also called hand sanitizers, that comply with the FDA *Food Code*. Confirm with the manufacturer that a hand sanitizer complies with the FDA *Food Code* before using.
- Label and store first aid supplies in a container that is located away from food or food contact surfaces.
- Label and store medicines for employees in a designated area and away from food contact surfaces. Do not store medicines in food storage areas.
- Store refrigerated medicines in a covered, leak proof container where they are not accessible to children and cannot contaminate food.





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Take corrective action if chemicals contaminate food or food contact surfaces.

- Discard any food that may have been contaminated by chemicals.
- Label and properly store any unlabeled or misplaced chemicals.
- Discard any chemical that cannot be identified.

Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.

References

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, & Institute of Child Nutrition. (2015). *Food safety in schools*. University, MS. Author.

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