

DS Fact Sheet on High-Level Hazard/Low-level Hazard Spills in the Lab

National Institutes of Health (NIH) • Office of Research Services (ORS) • Division of Safety (DS)

Is the Spill a High-Level Hazard or Low-level Hazard? *Answer the questions below.*

CALL **BALTIMORE FIRE DEPARTMENT (911)** FOR SPILLS INVOLVING:

1. Unknown chemical
2. Particularly Hazardous Substances (PHS) (carcinogen, reproductive toxins, and acute toxins)
3. You answer "NO" to any of the below questions.

*Additionally, the DEP manager (301) 674-5169, Pittj@mail.nih.gov and DOHS Safety must be contacted at NIA: (410) 864-6800, NIDA: (312) 667-5400.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CLEAN UP!

- Follow the appropriate emergency procedures for individuals who have been exposed.
- Evacuate and cordon off the area, closing doors and windows as you evacuate.
- Prevent others from entering the area.

The flowchart consists of eight questions in rectangular boxes, arranged vertically. To the left of the first question is a green line labeled 'YES' at the top, which runs down the left side and ends in an arrow pointing to the 'Low-Level Hazard Spill' box. To the right of the first question is a red line labeled 'NO' at the top, which runs down the right side and ends in an arrow pointing to the 'High-Level Hazard Spill' box. Each question box has a horizontal line extending from its left side to the green line and a horizontal line extending from its right side to the red line. If the answer to a question is 'YES', the green line continues straight down. If the answer is 'NO', the line turns right and then down, following the red line.

YES

Is the person(s) involved with the spill onsite?

Spill does not contain pyrophoric or reactive material?

Spill does not contain highly volatile liquid or aerosolized powder?

Spill does not contain highly corrosive chemicals (e.g., concentrated nitric acid (≥ 65%), hydrofluoric acid, or sulfuric acid (fuming) etc.)?

Is spill <500 ml outside containment or <1 liter inside containment?

Is the spill contained within the lab?

Are the correct and adequate spill cleanup materials available?

Is the person cleaning the spill trained, familiar with the hazards of the material spilled, and comfortable in performing the cleanup?

If you answer **YES** to all the questions, this is a Low-Level Hazard Spill. It is okay to clean it up.

If you answer **NO** to just **ONE** question, this is a High-Level Hazard Spill! **Call 911.**

NO