



OH&S TIP SHEET

Health and Safety in Early Childhood Services

Chemical safety

Both man-made and natural chemicals can be poisonous and have damaging effects on people. The terms 'hazardous substances' and 'dangerous goods' are used to describe harmful chemicals.

It is desirable to limit the number and types of chemicals used/stored in a service. Usually, the only chemicals that are likely to be required are:

- cleaning chemicals
- photocopier toner
- dishwashing powders and/or liquids
- insect repellent
- small quantities of solvents and paints (for maintenance tasks).

The use of these and other potentially hazardous chemicals must be monitored by adults.

All chemicals must be stored in secure, locked locations that are inaccessible to children.

Employees should be made aware that they are not to bring chemicals, such as cleaning products, to the service without prior approval. The employer should clearly communicate to employees which chemicals are acceptable to be stored and used



The taps on these chemical containers may leak onto the floor causing a slipping hazard.

onsite by the employer, parents and employees.

The employer should also advise that employer representatives, parents and employees should refrain from bringing chemicals into the service, unless endorsed by the employer.

An approved list of chemicals should be drawn up.

CHEMICALS REGISTER

It is a requirement of the legislation that an employer must keep a register of dangerous goods and hazardous substances. These registers may be combined into one. The register must contain:

- a list of all hazardous substances and dangerous goods stored and handled in the workplace
- a copy of the relevant MSDSs

supplied to the employer's workplace. All MSDSs should have issue dates within the last five years.

The employer must ensure that the register is easily accessible to any employee at the premises, or any other person who is likely to be affected by the hazardous substance or dangerous goods. However, there are some exemptions such as:

- for hazardous substances and dangerous goods, if the employer is a retailer and the substance is supplied in a consumer package intended for retail sale.

It is recommended that the employer record all chemicals in this register, not only those that are dangerous goods and hazardous substances. It is also recommended to include those that are in consumer packages.