

# Why Develop a Program?

A chemical cleanout and prevention program will:

- Protect the health and safety of children and school personnel
- Prevent fires and spills
- Prevent school closures
- Protect the environment
- Save money, reduce liability

Successful cleanout and prevention programs are customized to meet the specific needs of the school district. Several elements are common to all successful programs. These elements include:

- On-site technical assistance
- Education and hazard awareness training for school personnel
- School commitment to ensure proper chemical management
- Adequate funding for chemical disposal
- Partnerships with other organizations to achieve program goals

## Chemicals in Schools

Solutions for Healthy  
School Environments



## What's at Stake?

From elementary school maintenance closets to high school chemistry labs, schools house a variety of chemicals. Every year, throughout the country, hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on K-12 school accidents involving chemicals, which in some cases have been unused for decades. When improperly used or stored, chemicals can put students, staff, and others at risk from spills, explosions, or other accidental exposure.

### Chemicals Found in Schools

Explosives • Picric Acid  
Corrosives • Acetic Acid  
Flammables • Paint Thinner  
Toxics • Lead and Merc

# What Can You Do?

School leaders play a pivotal role in keeping schools safe from chemical accidents. You can help schools develop a chemical cleanout and prevention program and assemble a team of teachers, facilities staff, and administrators with technical expertise to assess chemical safety issues and set policy. Some important team roles are outlined in this brochure.

Working to keep children and school personnel safe:  
**The Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign**

To learn more please visit:  
[www.epa.gov/sc3](http://www.epa.gov/sc3)



## School Administrators

- Provide training for teachers and staff
- Develop and implement policies for proper purchase, inventory, use and storage
- Budget for a chemical inventory and periodic removal of chemicals



## Teachers

- Learn about chemical hazards and safety practices
- Plan classroom activities using the smallest amounts of the least hazardous chemicals possible
- Purchase only the amount of chemicals needed
- Ensure that your lab or classroom is equipped to handle potential mishaps associated with chemicals



## Facilities and Maintenance Staff

- Comply with state and local purchasing, storage and disposal guidelines
- Become involved in policy development associated with chemicals



## Nurses

- Educate students and school personnel about chemical exposure risks
- Eliminate use of mercury containing equipment



## Parents

- Contact your school district to be sure a program is in place to address potential issues

## In the News: Chemical Fire in High School

Fire caused by chemicals led to injuries and a costly cleanup due to the destruction of a storage room and smoke damage to two classrooms in a public school. Several chemicals mixed and ignited in a chemical storage room causing a fire that involved at least 113 chemicals stored in the room, including oxidizing agents, flammable liquids and cyanide salts.

The fire caused everyone in the school to be evacuated and caused injury to 3 people; one person was taken to the hospital. Fortunately, this incident occurred during the summer when there were few people in the school. This scenario might have caused a greater number of injuries had it occurred during the school year when students and staff would have been present.