



FACT

Each year in Australia 140,000 calls are made to Poisons Information centres by concerned parents or carers of young children. 3,500 children under 5 years of age are admitted to hospitals because of poisoning annually, and 5 to 10 of these children die each year (Source: Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia, 2006).

Many products and materials commonly found in and around the house are poisonous. Medicines account for 67% of poisonings, and chemicals 28%. Chemicals are not just used in manufacturing and heavy industry, they are a part of everyday life. Products we use to clean kitchens and bathrooms, wash clothes and dishes, kill pests and fertilize gardens are chemicals. Paints car and furniture polishes, swimming pool chlorine, petrol, engine oil, brake fluid and LPG are chemicals.

There are many household products we don't recognise as chemicals:

soap, shampoo, deodorants and perfumes, medicines, cough syrups and prescription drugs, vitamins, herbal medicines and organic cleaning products.

It's vital to correctly store and use all chemicals appropriately as per instructions.

They may be toxic, flammable or may react violently when mixed.

TIPS FOR SAFE CHEMICAL STORAGE AND USE

Keep your home safe! The NSW Fire Brigades recommends this simple safety checklist:

- ✓ **READ THE LABEL** before purchasing any chemical. Understand the correct use and the dangers posed by the chemical.
- ✓ **CHOOSE** the least dangerous product that will do the job, especially if children are present.
- ✓ **LOCK** chemicals in a cabinet out of the reach of children. Where possible, **STORE** liquid chemicals below dry chemicals. **REMEMBER** children are curious, inventive and good climbers.
- ✓ **FOLLOW** the manufacturer's **INSTRUCTIONS**. Handle with extreme **CAUTION**. Use recommended **PROTECTIVE** equipment: gloves, safety goggles, etc. Ensure adequate **VENTILATION**.
- ✓ **WASH** cleaning rags after use, and before throwing in the rubbish.
- ✓ **SEAL** chemicals in their original containers. **DO NOT REUSE** empty containers or repack product in different containers.
- ✓ **REMEMBER** some medi
- ✗ **DO NOT** mix chemicals.
- ✗ **DO NOT PREPARE** more chemical than you need for the job.
- ✗ **DO NOT** use chemicals for jobs for which they are not intended.
- ✗ **DO NOT** pour chemicals down the drain, the toilet or the gutter.

ACTION

- Have you **INSPECTED** your chemical storage areas and container seals recently?
- Have you **CONTACTED** your local council to **DISCARD** old and unused chemicals? (www.resource.nsw.gov.au)
- **FOLLOW** first-aid instructions. If skin or eyes are **BURNT**, if chemical has been **SWALLOWED** or fumes **INHALED** – call your doctor, local hospital or an ambulance.
- **REMEMBER** the **POISONS INFORMATION LINE: 13 11 26**.

