

Environmental 101 for Employees

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PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:

The environment – it's where we live, work, and play. And we have a responsibility to protect it. Workplace activities can have negative consequences on the environment, if we're not careful. In this program, we'll discuss some of the environmental protection methods used by your company and your responsibilities as an employee when it comes to protecting our environment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

After watching the program, the participant should be able to explain the following:

- The EPA and other governmental protection agencies;
- What is included in a stormwater pollution prevention plan;
- How to identify a hazardous material;
- The parts of a Hazardous Waste Program;
- Procedures to take during an accidental spill release;
- What is Universal Waste.

PROGRAM OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

- The environment – it's where we live, work, and play. And we have a responsibility to protect it. Workplace activities can have negative consequences on the environment, if we're not careful.
- In this program, Environmental 101 for Employees, we'll discuss some of the environmental protection methods used by your company and your responsibilities as an employee when it comes to protecting our environment.

GOVERNMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCIES

- Since the 1970s, the U.S. government has paid close attention to some of the environmental impacts that could occur as a result of general workplace activities.
- There are a number of agencies, both federally and at the state level, that help ensure companies are being responsible about things like managing waste and preventing pollution as best as they can.
- All employees should have a basic understanding of the various environmental protection methods used by their company and will receive job-specific training to prevent environmental mishaps. But first, let's take a closer look at some of the agencies involved in environmental protection.

THE EPA

- The federal branch that has the most influence and involvement is the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA.
- The EPA has several agendas, which include ensuring that Americans have clean air, land, and water, reducing environmental risks, and administering and enforcing federal laws that protect human health and the environment.
- While the EPA is a federal agency that oversees environmental protection standards, most states will also have one or more agencies that serve a similar purpose.
- States are required to at least meet the federal standards, but in some cases, the state agencies will implement laws that go above and beyond the federal requirements.

THE STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PLAN

- Next, let's discuss two of the main environmental compliance topics that may impact you as an employee: the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Programs.
- A stormwater pollution prevention plan is a comprehensive plan developed by your company that outlines the various ways in which it will minimize stormwater pollution.
- When stormwater drains away from a surface, it accumulates debris, sediment, chemicals, and other materials as it flows over land and heads toward stormwater collection systems and ultimately our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

- The stormwater pollution prevention plan must identify your facility's pollutants and list the Best Management Practices ("BMPs") that the facility is using to reduce the accumulation of those pollutants in stormwater.
- Most states require the employer to provide employees with annual training on stormwater pollution prevention. Basic training for all employees should include spill prevention and cleanup measures, including the prohibition of dumping any material into storm drains or waterways and an understanding of the Best Management Practices used to prevent stormwater pollution.
- In addition, employees who are directly responsible for implementing the stormwater pollution prevention plan should receive comprehensive stormwater training, including the location and type of BMPs being implemented, the installation requirements and water quality purpose for each BMP, maintenance procedures for each of the BMPs being implemented, spill prevention and cleanup measures, and inspection and maintenance recordkeeping requirements.
- In general, here are a few things that you can do as the employee to ensure you are meeting the requirements of your company's stormwater pollution prevention plan and any other EPA- or state-regulated protection requirements.
- Use only designated construction site entrances. Keep equipment away from silt fences, fiber rolls, and other sediment barriers.
- Know the locations of disposal areas, and know the proper practices for trash, concrete and paint washout, and hazardous chemicals.
- Keep soil, materials, and liquids away from paved areas and storm drain inlets. Never sweep or wash anything into a storm drain.
- Know the location and understand the proper use of spill kits.
- Know the locations of your site's designated protection areas. Keep equipment away from stream banks, valuable trees and shrubs, and steep slopes. Keep equipment off mulched, seeded, or stabilized areas.
- And finally, know who to contact when problems are identified.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM

- The next environmental compliance topic we will discuss is the Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Program.
- These programs will include proper procedures for handling, transporting, storing, and disposing of chemicals and other hazardous materials within your workplace.
- So how do you know if a material you're using is considered "hazardous"? One method is to check the container's label and/or safety data sheet for any pictogram, hazard statement, or other data that indicates hazardous properties such as flammable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic.
- In addition, the EPA has an extensive list of products and chemicals that it considers to be hazardous. If a chemical is on this list, it must be treated as hazardous.
- Your employer will provide you with task-specific training which will allow you to perform your work while remaining protected from any potential hazardous exposure. This training will include the selection and use of personal protective equipment, safe material handling practices, spill clean-up procedures, any potential health effects, and emergency response procedures.
- Hazardous waste is often accumulated near the point of generation by workers in the immediate area. This is known as a satellite accumulation area. It's a convenient way to store and control access to hazardous waste material before it is moved to a more centralized storage area.
- In general, hazardous waste found in satellite accumulation areas must be limited to one 55-gallon drum at any given time.
- Once the drum is full, the date must be marked on the container and it must be moved to the facility's centralized hazardous waste storage area within 72 hours, where it will remain until transported off-site for proper treatment and disposal.

SPILL RESPONSE

- Because chemicals are often being transported and used in multiple areas across the jobsite, there's always the potential for an accidental release to occur. Hazardous material spills can result in injuries and illnesses to workers, and they can also create hazards for the environment.
- When it comes to cleaning up a spill, the cleanup procedures may differ depending on what type of chemical was spilled, the amount that was spilled, whether it was indoors or outdoors, and other factors.
- This is why employees involved in these operations must be trained to respond properly to a leak or spill. Hazardous spill response is an important part of your organization's Emergency Action Plan. The plan will specify who will perform

the following spill response duties: limiting the spread of the spill, making sure that unauthorized people stay away from the incident area, stopping the leak or spill, if necessary, soaking up the spilled material with appropriate sorbents, and removing the contaminated sorbents and sealing them in an appropriate container for disposal.

- Keep in mind that only those employees who have been properly trained and authorized may participate in hazardous spill cleanup operations. Otherwise, evacuate to a safe area and follow your company's procedure to summon a spill response team.
- Any hazardous material or hazardous chemical that is no longer useful is considered waste, more specifically hazardous waste, and must be stored, transported, and disposed of according to the EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, also known as RCRA.

UNIVERSAL WASTE

- There are certain types of common, lower-risk, hazardous wastes for which the EPA has created a different waste designation known as "universal waste." There are five commonly discarded materials that are considered universal waste: batteries, pesticides, mercury-containing equipment, certain types of light bulbs, and aerosol cans.
- Your organization will have a specific location and designated container for the accumulation of these specific types of waste.
- All employees must be trained in the proper disposal of universal waste and understand that these items may not be placed in the regular trash.
- In addition, always follow your organization's procedures for recycling aluminum, cardboard, white paper, steel, and other recyclables. If you have any questions about proper waste disposal, be sure to ask your supervisor.

CONCLUSION

- So, there you have it: Environmental 101. As an employee, you have a responsibility to protect yourself, your co-workers, and the environment from the harmful effects of hazardous chemicals and materials. Your organization's stormwater pollution prevention plan and its hazardous materials and hazardous waste programs are key elements in doing so.
- Please, take your responsibility seriously, and make every effort to prevent workplace activities from having a negative impact on the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL 101 FOR EMPLOYEES

ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ

1. a

2. a

3. a

4. b

5. a

6. b

7. a

8. a

ENVIRONMENTAL 101 FOR EMPLOYEES

REVIEW QUIZ

Name _____ Date _____

The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.

1. All employees should have a basic understanding of the various environmental protection methods used by their company and will receive job-specific training to prevent environmental mishaps.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. States are required to at least meet the federal standards, but in some cases, the state agencies will implement laws that go above and beyond the federal requirements.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. A stormwater pollution prevention plan is a comprehensive plan developed by your company that outlines the various ways in which it will minimize stormwater pollution.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. Concrete and paint washout and hazardous chemicals do not have specific disposal areas and can be set out anywhere.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. The EPA has an extensive list of products and chemicals that it considers to be hazardous.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. In general, hazardous waste found in satellite accumulation areas must be limited to one 100-gallon drum at any given time.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. Keep in mind that only those employees who have been properly trained and authorized may participate in hazardous spill cleanup operations.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. All employees must be trained in the proper disposal of "universal waste" and understand that these items may not be placed in the regular trash.
 - a. True
 - b. False