



Safety Alert: Chemical Cocktails in Your Club

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Do you know if your employees are mixing cleaning products? You probably know about the potentially fatal effects of mixing products containing bleach and ammonia. You should also be aware of the hazards of mixing bleach and de-liming products.

Do you know that the combination of bleach and de-liming products have sent employees at various clubs across the country to the hospital? For example, in 2003, a dishwasher at a country club combined these two chemicals and the resultant chemical cloud forced the evacuation of the club on a Friday night during the busy summer season. Seven employees went to the hospital. More than 100 diners went home unfed and the golfers still on the course never had dinner. The temporary closing of the club led to lost revenue and negative member experiences.

If not properly trained, your employees may be tempted to mix incompatible chemicals. An employee's thought process might be: "If this product does a good job getting this item clean, maybe if I also used this other product at the same time, it'll be cleaner/brighter/shinier/faster!"

What Should You Do to Prevent This From Occurring at Your Club?

- Raise this issue at your next executive staff meeting and share a copy of this article.
- Ask the staff what chemicals they utilize in their department.
- Ensure that supervisors are reviewing the Material Safety Data Sheets and identifying what chemicals can not be stored in proximity to another or worse yet mixed together.
- Educate all employees in each department of the potential hazards if these or other incompatible chemicals are combined. Remember that OSHA's Hazard Communication standard (HCS) (29 CFR 1910.1200) requires training for all club employees, who potentially might be exposed to hazardous chemicals.

A Few Other Thoughts

- Remember to think beyond the inside of the clubhouse on this issue and remember the potentially dangerous chemical interactions on the golf course or at the swimming pool. What chemical cocktails can be mixed from the products in the maintenance department? What about the grounds department? Security office? Laundry area? Swimming Pool? Cooling tower?
- Bleach is probably the one chemical found in most clubs that reacts adversely with most other products.
- Clubs should ensure that all chemical containers are properly marked with their contents. Some employees assume that the "blue" product in a spray bottle is window cleaner, which it may or may not be.

Additional Resources

- [Common Cleaning Products May Be Dangerous When Mixed](#), New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.
- [ISSA's Safety & Health Portal – Cleaning Chemicals in the Workplace](#).

Through the OSHA and Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) Alliance, CMAA developed this Safety Alert for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. December 2009.