Spill Prevention Safety Talk

Preventing spills is vital to protecting the environment, avoiding unnecessary regulatory fines, and for preventing workplace injuries and illnesses. The best approach to prevent spills is through exercising proactive behavior to ensure they never occur.

This safety talk identifies best practices that can assist in preventing and controlling potential spills. Proper planning and safe handling of chemicals will contribute to a safe working environment, and if not prevent a spill, will provide for safe action in handling it.

Spill Prevention Through Preparation

To properly prepare for a work task involving the potential spill of chemicals, an individual should review the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical being used. The SDS will identify vital information needed, such as proper storage, possible chemical reactions, and what personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed for handling the chemical. All employees working with chemicals should be trained on the chemicals they use, Hazard Communication Program requirements, and the personal protective equipment they are to use. Never proceed with a work task if hazards are left unaddressed.

Utilizing Secondary Containments

One of the best methods to prevent fluids from reaching the ground is to utilize secondary containments. Chemicals, equipment using fuel, circulating equipment, and hose connections should all be staged in secondary containments.

Specific safeguards must be maintained to keep containments free from compromise. Spare containments or patch kits should be readily available at the worksite. Containment walls must be installed correctly, and sides should be free of collapse. All hardware designed to install containments must be used correctly and in their entirety. Hoses routed over containment sides should not rest directly on the walls to avoid causing a lay down effect. These low points serve as potential leak points should chemicals pool in the bottom.

It is important to note that chemicals that could potentially react adversely with each other should not be stored in the same containment. Spill cleanup kits should be available with a proper disposal receptacle near the containments should it be needed.

Summary

Preventing and containing spills is a significant concern in many industries. Spill prevention is a detailed process that focuses on preventative measures that can be taken to keep fluids from reaching the ground and potentially harming the environment. Using good judgment and being meticulous in adhering to policies and instructions will provide for a successful outcome.

Discussion points:

1. When dealing with a chemical spill, where can an individual determine what PPE to wear and what process to use for cleanup?

2. Why is proper containment setup so important?