

How a chemical spill is handled is dependent on the spill size, hazards associated with the released materials, available resources, and the experience/competence level of the responder. Refer to the steps below to determine the appropriate response for a chemical spill. NOTE: Follow [basic notification procedures](#) for all spill types.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MAJOR CHEMICAL SPILL AND A MINOR CHEMICAL SPILL

Major Chemical Spill Characteristics

- Large volume spill
- High hazard substance
- Substance which emits harmful/toxic vapor, gas, or dust
- Potential safety or health hazard to the responder
- Substance which is highly health hazardous (e.g., highly acutely toxic) by skin contact
- Spill entering public areas, floor drains, or inaccessible locations (e.g., liquid running under cabinets)

Minor Chemical Spill Characteristics

- Small volume
- No inhalation hazard (i.e., no toxic vapor or toxic dust)
- Does NOT require respiratory protection
- Not highly health hazardous by skin contact
- Accessible location
- Confined area (e.g., secondary containment or fume hood)



MAJOR CHEMICAL SPILL RESPONSE

1. Alert all persons nearby.
2. Evacuate the area and close all lab doors.
 - NOTE: If spill is liquid, apply absorbent material, pads, or pillows on or around the spill before evacuating ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
3. Call DPS immediately at **(213) 740-4321 UPC, (323) 442-1000 HSC**. Provide the following information:
 - Name, telephone number, and location
 - Type of incident, location, and time of occurrence
 - Name and quantity of material involved, if known
 - If victims are involved (see [Emergency Notification and Incident Reporting](#)), relay the victims' names and extent of injuries, if any
4. Restrict access to affected area.
5. Remain on-site to give full information to DPS, EH&S, and other responders.



MINOR CHEMICAL SPILL RESPONSE

1. Alert all persons nearby.
2. Evacuate all non-essential personnel from spill area. Deny entry to spill area.
3. Follow spill clean-up instructions per the [Hazardous Material Spill Clean-Up Guide Sheet](#) or provided by the manufacturer of a professional spill kit.
 - DO NOT attempt to clean up unless you are properly trained, equipped, and understand the chemical characteristics of the spilled material.
 - DO NOT attempt to clean up any spill that requires respiratory protection.
4. Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) that is compatible with the spilled chemical.
5. Dispose of chemical waste per the [Chemical Waste Disposal Guide Sheet](#).
6. Notify DPS of any spill, even if the spill was cleaned.

Questions? Contact labsafety@usc.edu or (323) 442-2200.