

Risk A/T[®] Work

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Benjamin Franklin 1736



We are pleased to introduce the next edition of **Risk A/T[®] Work**, a forum dedicated to sharing safety and loss control tips with our brokers and insureds.

Risk A/T[®] is our proprietary risk management approach which promotes informed risk analysis based on two behavioral factors — **A**ptitude and **T**olerance.

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If you would like to subscribe to **Risk A/T[®] Work**, please contact Victor Sordillo at vsordillo@sompo-intl.com

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Developing an Effective Hazardous Materials Safety Program

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According to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) historical records, an average of 160,910 fires per year are the result of flammable or combustible liquids first igniting. These fires caused an average of 454 civilian deaths per year, 3,910 civilian injuries per year and \$1.5 billion in direct property damage per year.¹ Understanding hazardous materials (HazMats) and their risks, and implementing a formal HazMat Safety Program that addresses safe practices for storage, use and open dispensing, is critical to saving your business and its people, the community and the environment.

Recognizing HazMats

HazMats are chemicals or substances that present either a physical or health hazard and can be found in all occupancies from residential to commercial to industrial facilities. They can be solid, gaseous, or liquid forms, with various levels of quantities, hazards and risk. *Physical hazards* are classified as combustible, flammable, explosive, oxidizing, unstable or water reactive. *Health hazards* are classified as toxic, highly toxic, or corrosive, having evidence that acute or chronic health effect can occur in exposed persons. Some HazMats meet multiple classifications.

While these materials are highly dangerous, many people are unfamiliar with safeguards and best practices for storing and/or handling HazMats.

Implementing Effective Safeguards

To manage and control the heightened risks from HazMats, building and fire codes, local Authorities Having Jurisdiction, and NFPA Codes and Standards, address numerous requirements and safeguards to the use, storage and open dispensing of these chemicals. The following techniques are prevention and reduction strategies as part of an overall effective HazMat Safety Program, and when implemented properly, can avoid or control hazard and risk exposures.

- **Outside Storage.** HazMats should be stored in a small, dedicated detached structure located separate from the primary building.
- **Hazards Analysis.** Know what HazMats are always present on site and their location; have Safety Data Sheets readily available in case of emergencies, such as accidental release, exposure protection for personal, or first aid.
- **Control Areas.** Maintain small quantities of HazMats and provide fire resistance rated compartmented separation.
- **Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Keep written policies that are readily accessible and shared throughout the facility with appropriate staff with clear guidance on emergency response activities.
- **Hazardous Materials Management Plan (HMMP).** Ensure HMMP's include facility site planning that address HazMat locations, emergency equipment, evacuation meeting location, etc.
- **Hazardous Materials Inventory Statement (HMIS).** Includes a summary report of HazMats and an inventory report that outline HazMats located in control areas along with their MAQ, container types, storage arrangement, etc.
- **Spill Control.** Prevents materials from leaving the space and provides cleanup kits.
- **Secondary Containment.** Contains materials to the room of origin and prevents migration into other portions of the building or into the environment.
- **Mechanical Exhaust Ventilation.** Prevents vapor accumulation.
- **Enhanced Sprinkler Protection.** Ensure the space is adequately protected throughout building/spaces based on HazMats present.
- **Explosion Control.** Vent deflagration to prevent building damage in case of a HazMat event.



- **Standby or Emergency Power.** Back-up generator or other power source that ensures critical equipment always remains operational.
- **Limit Control.** Controls materials and equipment temperature and pressure to prevent adverse reactions including explosions.
- **Emergency Alarm.** Notifies individuals early to a potential emergency and can include leaks or spills.
- **Hazard Identification Signs and Markings.** Clearly label containers and post legible signage on rooms where HazMats are stored so they can easily be identified.

Develop a HazMat Safety Culture

Developing a holistic safety culture that is embraced throughout an organization is important, but for HazMats, it is critical to build an effective HazMat Safety Program. By implementing the safeguard techniques referenced above, building owners, property managers and health and safety personnel will be better positioned to protect their properties and people from catastrophic losses due to HazMats.

Please reach out to your Sompo GRS Risk Control Specialist or contact us at 1 877 667 5733 or GRSRiskControlQuestions@sompo-intl.com for more information on implementing a formal HazMat Safety Program into your organization.

¹ *National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)*, John R. Hall, Jr., "Fires Starting with Flammable Gas or Flammable or Combustible Liquid." February 2014.