

15/08/2022

# Chemical fire fatality

**21 June 2022**

*A 23-year-old worker sustained fatal injuries while cleaning the bar area of a restaurant. The worker was using Acetone to clean the floor when it appears a nearby ignition source ignited the fumes, creating a firebomb/explosion and engulfing the worker.*



*Flammable liquid (Acetone)*

## Safety information

Exposure to hazardous chemicals at work must be prevented. Without adequate controls, they can cause fire, explosion, and other serious immediate damage. Exposed workers can also develop skin and eye irritations, cancer, and other illnesses that can affect the lungs and several other organs.

'Reasonably practicable' control measures must be taken at the workplace to manage the risks associated with storing, using, and handling hazardous chemicals.

## You must:

- keep flammable liquids or combustible substances in the lowest practical quantity - even small quantities of flammable liquid vapours may ignite and cause serious damage

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The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

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- conduct a risk assessment of all hazardous chemicals in the workplace - where possible substitute with less hazardous chemicals
- ensure suitable storage facilities and procedures are available and followed
- develop and maintain a hazardous chemical register for all hazardous chemicals used at the workplace
- ensure appropriate control measures, such as dispensary devices and spill trays, are in place for hazardous chemicals at work
- prepare and implement spill, injury and incident reporting and notification procedures
- obtain current safety data sheets (SDS) for the chemicals, ensure they are readily available to workers and that all workers understand the relevant information
- provide instruction, training, and supervision to workers on the safe use, storage, and handling of hazardous chemicals
- before first use, read the chemical label to know the hazards and follow all the safety precautions and instructions
- educate workers on spill management procedures, including wearing suitable gloves, correct respiratory protection (suitable type of mask) if required and chemical resistant footwear when cleaning up spills.
- ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided including gloves and chemical resistant footwear - these are used for routine daily work to protect workers from potential spills or chemical exposure

### Related guidance material

- [Checklist for restaurants and commercial kitchens - SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Flammable substances - SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Hazardous chemicals - SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace - code of practice](#)

### Further information

- [Speak Up Save Lives app - SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Traumatic event management plan - SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Mental health at work - NSW Government](#)

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## Incident Information Release

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