

# Up-to-Code: *Storing Hazardous Materials*

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The issues surrounding safe storage of chemicals and fertilizers are complex and ever changing. The lines of responsibility between the agencies that attempt to control these issues allow for overlap and can vary by jurisdiction. Make sure that you consult with your professional consultants to determine specific solutions to your facilities.

**In Minnesota**, the local Fire Department is likely to be the most active in monitoring the storage of hazardous materials. Because the Fire Department may be required to extinguish a fire or rescue an accident victim, they need to know that the materials are stored correctly. The Fire Department is also likely to be in control of the fire sprinkler design requirements.

The construction of the building, its plan layout and its materials, are controlled by the local Building Department and the applicable building code. The area of the building, its placement on the site, its use and its construction will determine if fire sprinkling is required.

**OSHA and the EPA** tend to focus on

safe procedures and allow the other agencies deal with the design of the facilities. That said, an understanding of the applicable procedures is useful to design the space needed for the required procedures.

**Fertilizers and pesticides have a corrosive effect** on building materials, especially metals. Controlling the moisture and temperature of the storage area is also important to maintaining product integrity and reducing corrosion. Also, the pesticide storage must be physically separated from the fertilizer storage to further protect against explosions. Because herbicides and pesticides can cross-contaminate each other, these products require separate storage.

**The light and ventilation fixtures in storage areas** should be explosion proof. A good practice is to switch the ventilation fan with the light so that both go on together. If you can place this switch outside of the storage area you can provide even more protection for your staff from fumes and explosion.

**Spill containment and recapture** is an important consideration around liquid

chemicals. A recessed concrete floor area or a raised curb can serve to contain a storage area. Reclaiming spilled material requires proper plumbing design engineering and equipment.

**Consider space** for storing your protective clothing and equipment. This area should be clean and organized to encourage safe procedures. Safety data sheets, procedure manuals and safety training records should be readily accessible for use and review.

**And finally**, make sure that emergency shower and eye wash facilities are available for your specific location. Make sure that these devices are always kept ready for use, accessible and in good working order.

The storage of pesticides and fertilizers is a fact of life for modern turf management facilities. Keeping up with the latest safety procedures will provide a safe work environment.

*(Editor's Note: David Harchanko may be reached at 952-401-7889 for more information.)*



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