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# PREPAREDNESS FACT OF THE WEEK

*This Week:*  
**THREATS & HAZARDS IN CALIFORNIA**

*Part 6 of 12*

## **CHEMICAL HAZARDS**



**Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, San Luis Obispo, California**

Chemical substances if released or misused can pose a threat to you or the environment. These chemicals are used in industry, agriculture, medicine, research, and consumer goods. As many as 500,000 products pose physical or health hazards and can be defined as “hazardous chemicals.” Each year, over 1,000 new synthetic chemicals are introduced. Hazardous materials come in the

form of explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive materials. These substances are most often released as a result of transportation accidents or because of chemical accidents in manufacturing plants.

Chemicals are a natural and important part of our environment. Even though we often don't think about it, we use chemicals every day. They can be found in our kitchens, medicine cabinets, basements, and garages. Chemicals help us keep our food fresh and our bodies clean. They help our plants grow and fuel our cars. Chemicals make it possible for us to live longer, healthier lives.

A home chemical emergency arises when chemicals are used improperly. Some chemicals that are safe, and even helpful in small amounts, can be harmful in larger quantities or under certain conditions. In fact, most chemical accidents occur in our own homes, and they can be prevented.

**You may be exposed in three ways:**

1. Breathing the chemical.
2. Swallowing contaminated food, water, or medication.
3. Touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or things that have touched the chemical.

**Remember, you may be exposed to chemicals even though you may not be able to see or smell anything unusual.**

**Learn about chemicals and chemical emergencies:**

- Chemicals are everywhere. They are an important part of life.
- The most common chemical accidents occur in our own homes and they can be prevented.
- The best way to avoid chemical accidents is to read and follow the directions for use, storage, and

disposal of the product

- Mixing products can be hazardous.

### **Additional Resources:**

Kings County's Website: [www.kingscountyoem.com](http://www.kingscountyoem.com) :  
<http://www.kingscountyoem.com/CountyKings/chemical.htm>

CDC Chemical Emergencies

FEMA Chemical Emergencies

**Do your part for preparedness and pass along the information!**

### **Resource:**

[http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep\\_chemical.aspx](http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep_chemical.aspx)

Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant Photo: [www.slocounty.ca.gov](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov)