

A Tragic Reminder: Protecting Workers From the Danger of Mixing Cleaning Products

On Thursday, November 7th, a worker at a Buffalo Wild Wings in Burlington, Massachusetts, applied a chlorine and bleach-based product to a floor, not knowing that another acid-based cleaner had already been spilled there earlier. A chemical reaction occurred, and the employee grew sick from the fumes and fled. The manager of the restaurant attempted to squeegee the noxious combination out of the restaurant to an outside drain but was overcome and later died of his injuries. At least thirteen other employees and customers were hospitalized.

We at EnviroX were deeply saddened to hear of this accident and want to take a moment to send our condolences to everyone involved. Although no EnviroX products were involved in the accident, we know you and your staff might have concerns about the products you're using. We wanted to address those and reinforce our company's mission, which is to keep custodians, janitors, and all workers who perform cleaning tasks safe.

Here are some facts about using cleaning products you should know:

Never mix any cleaning products. This is perhaps the simplest and easiest to remember advice we can give you. In this instance, the mixture of cleaning products seems to be accidental. It's important to note that some products leave behind residue or low quantities of liquid once they're used. This is where proper training and procedures can be incredibly helpful. Sometimes a poorly trained worker doesn't understand that combining cleaning products can be dangerous. Even with safer cleaning products like those we manufacture, chemicals should never be mixed.

Products mixed with bleach. When bleach is combined with any product, there is the risk of generating toxic chlorine gas (Cl₂), which can lead to a host of respiratory illnesses or death. If any cleaning product mixes with bleach, you should take the incident extremely seriously. This is true with our cleaning products—even safer cleaning products mixed with bleach can be dangerous.



If chemicals are mixed, here's what to do.

- A) Leave the area immediately! Move to a well-ventilated area or, better yet, outdoors. Do not attempt to clean up the mixture yourself.
- B) If you have inhaled any amount of the gas or suspect that you have, call 911 and seek immediate medical attention. If you have not inhaled any of the gas, call poison control; have all relevant SDSs available

Bleach Alternatives

Cleaning workers suffer more injuries than other workers in private industry. Studies going as far back as 2007 have shown that custodial workers, in particular, have as much as two times the number of injuries as other workers.² EnviroX exists to provide you alternatives to harsher chemicals. It's better for you, it's better for the environment, and it's better for the men, women, and children who occupy the spaces you clean. Proper training and respect are essential for any safe use of a cleaning product, but starting off with safer cleaning alternatives can go a long way to reducing the number and severity of accidents. For floor cleaning, we offer Green Certified Neutral Floor Cleaners and powerful Tile and Grout renovators that you can use in place of bleach.

A Safer, Healthier Way to Clean

Custodians and other workers who clean the places where we live, learn, work, and play are the unsung heroes of our daily lives. Without their hard work and dedication, our world would be less safe and a great deal more unpleasant. We have always believed it is our responsibility to care and take action when it comes to their health. This latest incident is just a sad reminder of how important that mission is.

1. Li, D.K. (2019). Deadly, accidental mix of acid and bleach blamed for Buffalo Wild Wings manager's death. NBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/deadly-accidental-mix-acid-bleach-blamed-buffalo-wild-wings-manager-n1078866>

2. Smith, S. (2016). Safety Supply Checklist for Cleaning Professionals. EHS Today. Retrieved from <https://www.ehstoday.com/safety/safety-supply-checklist-cleaning-professionals>

Need help? Contact us.

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