

Chapter 11 – Poisonous Materials

Improper use, storage and/or location, display, and labeling of poisonous and toxic materials, first aid supplies, medicinals and cosmetics present public health risk due to food and food contact surface contamination.

Chemicals such as cleaning and sanitizing agents and first aid creams or other medicines that might be stored in a first aid kit are considered poisonous. Accidental exposure to these materials in foods can cause almost immediate sicknesses.

EXAMPLES OF HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

The public health significance of having requirements for this area can be best appreciated with the following examples of potentially hazardous conditions *found in Idaho food establishments*:



- An aerosol pesticide in which the spray mechanism had been depressed was stored in a discount basket of a retail market with food items. The surrounding food containers were saturated with the chemical;
- Garden insecticides and herbicides stored above a produce display unit with several of the containers lying on their side;
- Assorted veterinary medicines displayed above a frozen food display case;
- Unapproved insecticide container stored on an ice machine top next to the ice scoop, and in another situation the insecticide container was found in a box of ice storage bags on the ice machine;
- Unlabeled clear cleaner in a spray bottle on the same shelf with plain water in the same type of spray bottle (the water is used to spray on the grill to produce steam while cooking food);
- Pest strip located over a food preparation table; and
- Employee medicine located on a shelf above ready-to-eat food in a refrigeration unit.

Any of the above situations could have resulted in disastrous consequences and *only luck* prevented serious chemical poisoning or medicinal contamination.

CHEMICAL AND PESTICIDE USE REQUIREMENTS

All pesticides, sanitizers, cleaners, polishes, lubricants and other toxic chemicals used in a food establishment *must* be:

- **Necessary** for the operation of the establishment. *Unnecessary chemicals should not be found anywhere in the establishment;*

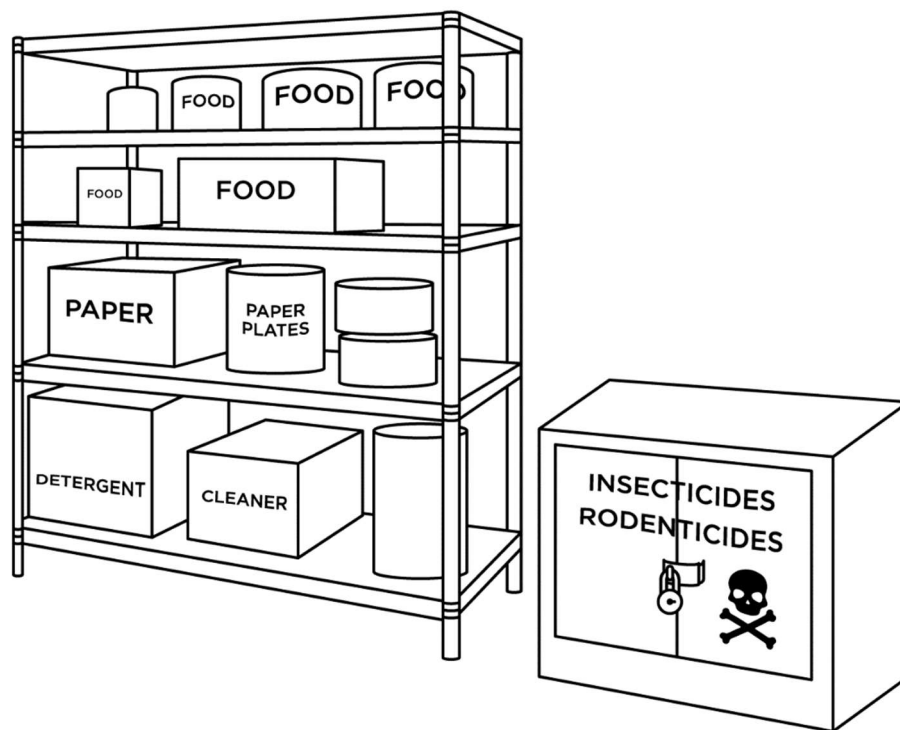
- **Approved** for use in the food establishment. Toxic chemicals that have an EPA number on the container will have specific statements pertaining to its use in food establishments.

NOTE: Some products, such as lubricants, may contain statements *by the manufacturer* as being approved by USDA. Before use, confirm that products are approved for specific use in a food establishment. Restricted-use pesticides can only be used by a certified pest control operator;

- **Used properly** according to the manufacturers' label instructions;
- **Properly labeled** when chemicals are removed from the original container and put into a working container.

NOTE: Food containers must not be used as working containers for chemicals, and

- **Properly stored and located** with insecticides and rodenticides stored separately from cleaning compounds and other chemicals, and **ALL** chemicals and pesticides stored separately from food, food contact surfaces and single-use and single-service articles. The term "separate" **does not** include storage of toxic chemicals above food, food contact surfaces, and single-use and single-service articles.



CHEMICALS AND PESTICIDES FOR RETAIL SALES

All pesticides, detergents, cleaners, polishes, lubricants, solvents, fuels, paints, etc., in storage and on display for retail sale in a food establishment must be properly stored and displayed. These items must be separated by adequate spacing or partitioning from, and not stored above food, single-service articles and single-use articles intended for use with food.

FIRST AID SUPPLIES, MEDICINALS AND COSMETICS

All first aid supplies, medicinals and cosmetics must be stored and displayed in such a manner as to prevent contamination. Special consideration needs to be given to the following:

- **First aid kits and supplies** must be properly identified and located away from food, food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils, single-service and single-use articles;
- **Medications**, both human and animal, for retail sale must be properly stored and located as previously mentioned for toxic materials;
- **Medications** vitally necessary for employee use must be stored with personal belongings and/or in designated areas where contamination will not occur; and
- **Cosmetics** for retail sale in food establishments must be properly stored and located as previously mentioned for toxic materials. Personal cosmetics must be stored with personal belongings in designated areas.

SUMMARY

- Examples of improper use, storage and display of chemicals, pesticides and medicinals reveal that Idaho food establishments can create hazardous conditions.
- Chemicals and pesticides used in a food establishment must be necessary, approved, used properly, properly labeled, and properly stored and located.
- Some examples of necessary chemicals include cleaning agents, sanitizing agents, and first aid materials.
- All toxic items must be stored and displayed to prevent contamination of food, single-service articles and single-use articles.
- All first aid supplies, medicinals and cosmetics must be stored and displayed to prevent contamination of food, single-service articles and single-use articles.

Reference: *Idaho Food Code, Chapter 7*