

## **HEALTH DEPT. URGES CAUTION WHEN USING SWIMMING POOL CHEMICALS**

### *Risk of Toxic Fumes, Fire and Explosion from Improper Handling*

The Allegheny County Health Department is reminding residential as well as other swimming pool owners to follow instructions carefully when handling chemicals as they get their pools ready for the outdoor summer pool season.

The warning was prompted by three separate incidents last week involving pool owners who risked exposing themselves and others to toxic fumes, fire and explosion by dangerously mixing or improperly handling pool chemicals.

“No serious injuries occurred but these incidents demonstrate the potentially hazardous conditions that can result if proper procedures are not strictly followed when using swimming pool chemicals,” said County Health Director Dr. Bruce W. Dixon.

Safety tips for using swimming pool chemicals are listed below and also may be obtained by visiting the Health Department’s web site, [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net), or calling **412-687-ACHD** for a brochure.

#### ***Safe Storage***

- Store chemicals in original containers, in cool, dry, well-ventilated place away from sunlight.
- Never store oxidizers and acid near each other; oxidizers release chlorine gas if they come in contact with acids.
- Don’t stack containers and don’t store liquids above powders or solids.
- Avoid storing chemicals or other materials above your head.
- Never store chemicals near gasoline, fertilizers, herbicides, grease, paints, tile cleaners, turpentine or any flammable materials.
- Don’t re-use containers. Wash out empty containers and dispose of them.
- Keep chemicals out of reach of children and pets.

#### ***Safe Handling***

- Follow instructions. Ask your supplier for help if there is anything you don’t understand.
- Keep containers closed when not in use and never use contents of unlabeled containers.
- Wear protective gear and clothing, including gloves and footwear.
- Always add the chemical to the pool water; never add water to the chemical.
- Use separate, clean metal or plastic measuring cups for each chemical. Never use scoops made of wood.

- Don't mix different chemicals together and never put spilled chemicals back into containers.
- Protect chemicals from moisture and water. Even putting a wet scoop into a container may cause a reaction.

- Avoid touching undiluted chemicals and wash hands thoroughly after handling chemicals.
- Don't smoke when handling chemicals and never expose them to heat or flames.
- If fire breaks out, don't use a "dry chemical" fire extinguisher. Only use large amounts of water to douse the flames. If you can't put it out right away, vacate area and call the fire department.

### ***Cleaning Up Spills***

- Only clean up a spill when it's small, the chemical is dry and not mixed with any other material, and there is no chemical reaction.

- Ventilate area, if indoors; wear protective gear -- gloves, boots and aprons made of butyl rubber or neoprene as well as safety glasses or goggles.

- Carefully place spilled material in a clean, dry plastic bag or container. Place filled plastic bag inside another bag. Don't place material back into original container.

- Don't generate dust when cleaning up a powder or solid; dust may react with moisture on your skin and cause injury.

- Keep an eye on material once it's picked up, as a reaction may be delayed.

- Dispose of material according to manufacturer's instructions.

- Don't clean up a spill if the chemical has mixed with other material, is hissing, bubbling, smoking, gassing or burning, or containers are bulging. Vacate area and call the fire department.

## **Heidelberg Vol. Fire Department**

456 First Street, Heidelberg, PA 15106

Non-Emergent: (412) 276-5955 -or- [info@heidelbergfire.com](mailto:info@heidelbergfire.com)

In an **emergency**, please call 9-1-1