

# Safetyline

Apartment Association of Michigan

**Member Benefits**  
Membership in the Apartment Association carries benefits beyond savings on Work Comp insurance. Members join a network of their peers; thus gaining access to information sharing and the tools needed for effective loss control.

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## Pristine Pools Depend On Smart Use Of Pool Chemicals

*Editor's Note: We encourage all of our members to use this information as a starting point for effective safety communication. Members should add to it based on their safety needs and work environments.*

Grim faces look down at the greenish, off-color victim and say, "Maybe if we shock it we can get it back to normal."

The patient in this case isn't a person, it's your community's swimming pool. Keeping the waters of a swimming pool clear and pristine has lots to do with care, maintenance

and the use of chemicals. As common as these chemicals are, they are nonetheless hazardous if not transported, used and stored in the proper manner.

Memorial Day weekend – the traditional opening for swimming pools – is just a few weeks away so the time is ripe to put sound pool chemical safety practices into place.

### Transporting Pool Chemicals:

1. Keep your vehicle clean and organized.

2. Separate incompatible chemicals, distribute between front seat, back seat and / or trunk.

3. Don't purchase or carry damaged containers.

4. Anchor your load securely, so that it won't move around.

5. Ask your pool supply dealer for MSDS sheets, for your information and HAZMAT personnel in case of an accident.

### Storing Pool Chemicals:

1. Store chemicals in a

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## The ABCs Of Pool Chemical Safety Programs

### Chemical Safety

A variety of chemicals may be used to treat pool water. Workers exposed to hazardous chemicals should be required to wear proper personal protective equipment. Organic (i.e. sodium dichlorocyanurate) and inorganic (i.e. calcium hypochlorite) are the two main types of chlorine-based chemicals used in pools - mixing or cross-

contamination of these chemicals can form an explosive mixture. Workers can be affected by simply using the same scoop or pail for both chemicals without cleaning them, or when adding one product after the other to the pool chlorinator.

Swimming pool chemicals, such as chlorine, are oxidizers. These have the potential

to cause a fire or explosion. Some pool chemicals may also be corrosive and can chemically destroy body tissues on contact. The damage begins as soon as the chemical touches the skin, eyes, respiratory tract, or digestive tract.

Workers should always read and follow the chemical manufacturer's

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To receive a copy of Safetyline, contact Brenda Boomer at [bboomer@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bboomer@spsinsurance.com), or access it online at: [www.apartments.org](http://www.apartments.org)

## Chemical Safety

instructions carefully and take the following actions when handling pool chemicals:

- Keep containers closed when not in use.
  - For transferring or measuring chemicals, always use a separate scoop for each chemical, and use clean metal or plastic scoops (not wood).
  - Wear appropriate protective equipment and clothing, including gloves and footwear as needed, and always wash your hands after handling chemicals.
  - Keep moisture away from the chemicals.
  - Never add water to pool chemicals unless so instructed on the container label - most pool chemicals are meant to be added to large quantities of water; failure to do so may result in the release of corrosive chlorine gas.
  - Protect chemicals from accidental contact with rainwater and wet floors/decks.
- Other chemical safety procedures that should be followed by workers include: (1) Never use the contents of

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unlabeled containers, mix different chemicals together, or put spilled chemicals back into their containers; (2) Never mix old chemicals with new chemicals, even if they are the same chemical, (3) Never smoke near chemicals or expose them to heat or flame, (4) Never touch undiluted chemicals with your hands, and (5) Never reuse a container after emptying it - always wash it out and dispose of it.

### Storage:

Steps to take in storing pool chemicals include: (1) Keep the chemicals out of the reach of children and pets; (2) Store them in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, away from sunlight, and in their original containers; (3) Do not store chemicals above head height; (4) Remember that certain chemicals react with others - keep oxidizers away from acids to prevent the oxidizers from releasing chlorine gas; (5) Do not store liquids on shelves that are above powders or solids; and (6) Keep all pool chemicals away from gasoline, fertilizers, herbicides, grease, paints, tile cleaners, turpentine, or flammable materials, especially if pool chemicals are stored in a shed or small storage room.

## Pristine Pools

cool, dry, well ventilated area, with a locked entry. Do not set outside in the sun.

2. Keep out of reach of children.
3. Keep pool and spa chemicals separate from each other, and from other chemicals. Violent reactions such as explosion, fire or noxious gas production can occur when incompatible chemicals contact each other. Never, ever mix any chemicals together.
4. Do not stack chemical containers on top of one another.
5. Replace lids and caps firmly and immediately after opening.
6. Post MSDS sheets and emergency information and phone numbers nearby.

### Use Of Pool Chemicals:

1. Follow label directions carefully. Read the instructions! If the label is faded or torn, don't guess what it is. Return it to your dealer.
2. Add chemicals to pool water, not the other way around. Chemicals should be added directly to the pool, or through a feeder especially designed for that type of chemical. Chemicals added directly to the skimmer could allow strong concentrations to harm pool equipment or swimmers. If the instructions suggest diluting with water first, use a clean, oversized bucket with water in it, then add chemicals to the water in the bucket. Read the Instructions!
3. Wear safety gear when handling chemicals. This may include a breathing respirator to prevent inhalation of fumes, face shield, gloves and apron.
4. Do Not Mix Chemicals...EVER! This includes direct mixing of full strength chemicals in a bucket, diluted concentrations and even adding chemicals to the same location in the pool. At the very least you may get a water

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quality problem, or you may endanger your life or the life of others. Chemicals can mix with each other by using containers or scoops which were previously used for other chemicals. Always use a clean bucket and scoop, designated only for that chemical.

5. Dispose of wastes and spills safely and properly. Immediately clean up any chemical spills. If a violent reaction has occurred, contact the fire department immediately and they will instruct you on steps to take until their arrival, if any. If the spilled chemical is a solid, carefully sweep it up using a clean broom and shovel, and place it in a clean, dry, plastic container. Avoid breathing the dust. If possible, dilute the chemical in water and add it to the pool or spa. Then test and balance the water. If this is not possible, contact the fire department for instructions on disposal. Do not place floor sweepings of chemicals back into the original container. Any foreign substance such as dust, dirt, water can cause a reaction inside the container. Do not use a vacuum cleaner or shop vac to clean up spilled substances. If the spilled substance is a liquid, it should be soaked up with clean, absorbent materials and placed inside a clean plastic or plastic lined container. Flush the area with large amounts of water.

6. Never smoke around any chemicals. Fire or explosion could result.

7. Do not breath chemical fumes or dust. Wash skin if contact occurs. If chemicals splash in eyes, flush eyes for 15 minutes, and see a physician immediately.

8. Use only a water filled fire extinguisher on a chlorine chemical fire. Never use the dry chemical type of extinguisher.

9. Keep posted emergency numbers for the fire department, poison control center, and MSDS sheets of all chemicals on hand.

# SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE APARTMENT INDUSTRY

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ JOB NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## STAYING SMART ABOUT POOL CHEMICALS

- **Start each season as though it is your first season with a pool.**
- **Segregate pool chemicals from other chemicals/compounds that might be used at your community.**
- **Clean out all old chemicals and discard.**
- **Carefully label where individual pool chemicals will be stored.**
- **Don't assume that if you used a chemical in prior seasons that its formulation and resulting actions are still the same.**
- **Place copies of this newsletter in storage areas and vehicles as a useful reference.**
- **Cross train housekeepers and grounds crews on this important safety topic**
- **On a rotating basis, assign a pool "cop" to check and ensure that all protocols are being followed.**
- **Post emergency numbers for the fire department, poison control center and MSDS sheets of all chemicals on hand.**

SPECIAL TOPICS FOR YOUR PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting attended by:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax this page to the head of your safety team

**The Agenda:  
Pool and Chemical  
Safety:  
Pool Chemistry,  
Filtration and Chemical  
Maintenance**

Loss control seminars designed to enhance existing safety programs, bring members new information for their changing industry and heighten their safety awareness.

**Association Members:  
You're Invited to a  
Loss Control Seminar  
May 28, 2008  
9:00 to 10:30 a.m.**

**Association Offices  
30375 Northwestern Hwy.  
Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334  
Contact Brenda Boomer at  
bboomer@spsinsurance.com for details**



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