Preventing Chemical Wetting

FROM THE CASE FILES

At a Rensselaer County home, a lid was left open on a five-gallon pail that contained chlorine tablets allowing moisture to enter the pail. The chlorine tablets reacted with the water, producing chlorine gas and a strong odor in the area. An environmental agency and a hazardous materials team responded to the home and conducted cleanup.

What is chemical wetting?

Addition of a limited volume of water to a chemical.

Why is chemical wetting dangerous?

It can produce an unwanted chemical reaction and release a toxic gas.

Potential sources of water

- Leaks from roofs, windows, doors, wall and floor joints, water pipes, hoses, sprinkler systems, and drains.
- Moisture from air when the humidity is high.

Ways to prevent chemical contact with water

ALWAYS

- Close containers properly and tightly.
- Enclose opened or damaged packaging in waterproof containers.
- Store chemicals off the floor and away from doors and windows.
- Check for roof leaks, open or broken windows, or leakage from water pipes, hoses or sprinkler systems.
- Check for faulty or clogged floor drains.
- Be careful when water is used for cleanup of areas near stored packages.

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