



## PHOTOGRAPHIC CHEMICALS

### SafetyNet #48

Most common photographic chemicals can be used safely if simple precautions are followed. The following safety tips are applicable to most aqueous chemicals used in black-and-white and color photography. Always read the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for a specific chemical before use.

#### General Safety

- Avoid creating dust when mixing dry photographic chemicals. Use premixed chemicals if available. Wet mop any spilled dry chemicals.
- Ensure good general ventilation in photographic workrooms. EH&S recommends a minimum of ten (10) air changes per hour. Local exhaust may be required for more dangerous processes such as selenium toning and all color processes.
- Wear disposable chemical resistant gloves or use tongs to avoid skin contact when handling photographic paper. Many photochemicals are sensitizers and most are either acidic or alkaline.
- Use the least toxic chemicals available. Avoid cyanides, heavy metals, and developers containing pyrocatechol or pyrogallol.
- Towels should be provided to encourage hand wiping. All clothing and towels used in the workroom must be washed frequently.
- Provide an emergency eyewash in every darkroom.
- When mixing water and acid, **always** add the acid to the water to prevent violent splashing.
- Dispose of chemical wastes properly. Almost all photographic chemicals must be disposed of as hazardous waste through EH&S. See SafetyNet #8, "Guidelines for Disposal of Chemical Waste" for more information.
- **Always** wash hands after using chemicals and before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- **Do not** eat, drink, or smoke in work areas.

For additional information, contact your EH&S Safety Advisor, EH&S at 530-752-1493 or [ehsdesk@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ehsdesk@ucdavis.edu).