

Pre-Winter Chemical Storage & Spill Response Preparedness Audit



Winter conditions can play havoc with your hazardous chemical storage and spill response operations. Common risks:

- Freezing temperatures can damage containers, piping, valves, and seals;
- Temperature-sensitive products may become unstable or unusable; and
- Snow, ice, blocked access routes, and heating failures can complicate spill response.

For these reasons, you should treat pre-winter chemical inventory review as more than just a routine inspection. Use it as an opportunity to identify and correct deficiencies before winter conditions make them harder to manage. Here's a template you can use to carry out Pre-Winter Chemical Preparedness Review. This tool is also available for download in doc and PDF formats below.

Pre-Winter Chemical Storage & Spill Response Preparedness Review

Purpose: Use this checklist to identify ventilation problems, determine when further air-quality assessment is warranted, and document corrective action.

Site/location: _____

Audit date: _____ **Auditor:** _____

Winter storage period reviewed: _____

Instructions: Verify actual conditions, not just written procedures. Mark each item *Yes*, *No* or *N/A*. Record every deficiency identified and assign it a corrective action, responsible person, and deadline. Review all “No” responses for risk significance. Critical deficiencies must be corrected before the affected storage or operation proceeds.

1. Storage Conditions & Equipment

Verification item	Yes	No	N/A
1. SDSs and supplier instructions for each hazardous product have been reviewed for relevant temperature and storage requirements.	☐	☐	☐
2. Temperature-sensitive chemicals and equipment vulnerable to freezing have been identified.	☐	☐	☐
3. Heating, insulation, monitoring, or other required temperature controls are adequate.	☐	☐	☐
4. Heating, insulation, monitoring, or other required temperature controls will remain adequate in case shutdowns occur.	☐	☐	☐
5. Secondary containment is serviceable, unobstructed and protected against relevant winter conditions.	☐	☐	☐

1. Spill-Response Readiness

Verification item	Yes	No	N/A
6. Spill kits contain appropriate, serviceable materials for the chemicals on site.	☐	☐	☐
7. Required PPE and emergency equipment are accessible and suitable for expected conditions.	☐	☐	☐

8. Snow, ice, stored materials, and access restrictions will not prevent access to response equipment or isolation points.	☐	☐	☐
9. Employees know when to engage in response operations and when to withdraw, isolate the area, and summon trained responders or emergency services.	☐	☐	☐
10. Spill procedures address exposure, evacuation, drain protection, and emergency escalation as applicable.	☐	☐	☐

1. Reporting & Corrective Action

Verification item	Yes	No	N/A
11. Applicable spill notification and reporting requirements have been identified for the site.	☐	☐	☐
12. Cleanup waste handling, disposal arrangements, and responsible personnel have been confirmed.	☐	☐	☐
13. Deficiencies have been assigned to named individuals with deadlines and interim controls where needed.	☐	☐	☐
14. A process is in place to repeat checks after severe cold, heating failures, shutdowns, or material changes.	☐	☐	☐

1. Deficiency & Corrective-Action Log

Deficiency / risk	Priority	Corrective action or interim control	Responsible person	Due date
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Priority classification

- **Critical:** Immediate or potentially serious risk requiring correction before the affected storage or operation proceeds.

- **High:** Significant risk requiring prompt corrective action and appropriate interim controls.
- **Routine:** Lower-risk deficiency to be corrected within an assigned, reasonable timeframe.

Unresolved critical deficiencies:

Required operating restrictions or escalation:

1. Management Readiness Decision & Instructions

Before approving winter storage, review every “No” response and determine whether it represents a critical deficiency.

Critical deficiencies include conditions such as inadequate temperature control for a chemical requiring controlled storage, compromised spill containment, or unavailable or unsuitable spill-response equipment where needed. Correct the deficiency before the affected storage or operation proceeds. If immediate correction is not possible, restrict or suspend the affected activity until effective controls are verified.

Other deficiencies must be documented, assigned to a responsible person, and given a deadline. Establish interim controls appropriate to the risk. An unresolved deficiency must not compromise safe storage or applicable legal compliance.

Overall Status:

- ☐ **READY FOR WINTER** – No critical deficiencies remain. Other deficiencies have been addressed or are subject to verified controls that maintain safe conditions and compliance.
- ☐ **READY WITH RESTRICTIONS** – Affected storage or operations have been restricted, and the remaining activities have been assessed and confirmed safe to proceed.
- ☐ **NOT READY** – A critical deficiency remains unresolved, or safe storage and operation cannot be confirmed.

Outstanding actions and restrictions reviewed: ☐ Yes

Management authorization: _____

Title: _____ **Date:** _____