Script for Module Eight

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Welcome to Module 8 of our hazard communication training sessions. This training will cover other chemicals that may also be used in food processing sanitation, disinfection, and sterilization. This module will provide guidance on how to find information on these additional chemicals.

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Remember you can find information on chemicals you use from the label on the original container, the safety data sheet for that product, and by asking your supervisor for help.

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Formaldehyde is a potent chemical used as a sterilizer and fungicide in certain applications. The physical application of formaldehyde will be different depending on use but it should only be used in well ventilated areas. As a short-term health effect, it is an irritant to the skin and respiratory tract. However, long term and repeated exposure to formaldehyde is known to cause cancer. Wear gloves and chemically resistant clothing to prevent skin contact. OSHA has specific rules for employers using formaldehyde that includes things like training employees, providing respirators and measuring the amount of formaldehyde in the air.

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Sodium hydroxide, also known as caustic soda, is a fat and grease remover used in food and beverage processing facilities. It is a highly corrosive caustic that is a skin, eye, and respiratory irritant. It is important to prevent skin and eye contact with sodium hydroxide, so it is crucial to wear gloves, safety glasses or googles, and protective clothing to prevent contact with sodium hydroxide.

It has a slimy feeling on the skin, like egg whites – you don't feel it burning, but if you can feel the sliminess it means you need to wash your skin promptly.

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Various acids are commonly used in sanitation like acetic, citric, sulfuric and hydrochloric acid. They are all corrosive, some more than others, and it is important to know if you are working with a concentrated or diluted product. The product label should have that information, or ask your supervisor. Prevent skin and eye contact because they can all cause permanent skin and eye damage. Wear appropriate gloves, safety glasses or goggles, and protective clothing to prevent contact with your skin.

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Ammonia in water is another sanitation chemical that is corrosive. Ammonia should never be used with, or near bleach as it produces toxic gases which could be deadly to breathe. Prevent skin and eye contact with ammonia solutions by wearing gloves, safety glasses or goggles, and protective clothing.

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Anhydrous ammonia, ammonia without water, is used in some industrial refrigeration systems. It is meant to be contained within a closed system, so you should not see it. However, if there is a leak then you may see a white vapor and you should notify your supervisor immediately. Smell is generally the first indication that ammonia is near. Anhydrous ammonia is flammable along with being toxic and corrosive and can cause skin burns, eye and respiratory irritation. If you have an anhydrous ammonia refrigeration system at your facility, then your employer will provide additional information on detecting leaks and instructions on what to do if there is an accidental release.

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