Laboratory of Pathology, NCI, CCR

Under Sink Storage Policy

According to the Joint Commission (TJC) standards and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations, storage of reagents and chemicals in under sink cabinets are allowed in limited quantities as long as the reagents and chemicals do not have the possibility to react with each other or with moisture. The following are guidelines for items permitted to be placed under the sinks in LP clinical laboratories:

- Any product that is used for cleaning such as small amounts of chemicals including cleaning solutions, disinfectants and laboratory reagents in working quantities. Examples include:
  a. Bleach
  b. Wescodyne
  c. Liquid Hand Soap (plastic pump containers)
  d. Glass cleaner (Windex/Glass Plus)

- Needle buckets and other cleaning buckets

- Chemicals that can react with each other (i.e. bleach and ammonia) should be stored separately to ensure that they cannot react with each other. If unsure, refer to the chemicals' material safety data sheets (MSDS) to verify reactivity with other chemicals.

The following are items that are prohibited for Under Sink Storage:
- No acids and bases should be stored under sinks where contamination by moisture may occur. *(GEN:72075)*

- Any product that is inherently 'clean' or can be damaged by water such as:
  a. Paper towels
  b. Toilet tissue
  c. Medical supplies (towels, gowns, gloves, etc.)
  e. Books
  f. Soap (powdered or bar soap in cardboard boxes/paper wrappers)

NIH Clinical Center infection control and safety officers periodically conduct risk assessments for under-sink storage. Examples of risk assessments could include an evaluation of compliance with infection control policies for sterile supplies or patient items, hazardous materials for chemical storage, or information management for paper record. Safety Officers and Building Engineers may be a resource for information regarding local and state codes.