

Curiosity Doesn't Always Kill

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In some cases, it just makes you dizzy and burns your nose. Ask a PO3 who went looking for an anti-seize compound to finish a maintenance job.

The petty officer came across a container marked "sealing compound." Because he wasn't familiar with it, his curiosity begged him to open the container and check its contents. He found a paint-like substance, which spurred him to investigate further. He decided to see how the compound smelled. One giant sniff later, he realized the substance was toxic. Corpsmen treated and released the curious Sailor with no permanent damage.

On another occasion, an E-2 was changing the batteries in a flashlight when he had an overwhelming urge to explore the mystery of what made the batteries work. He grabbed a pair of scissors and was dissecting one of the batteries when acid squirted in his left eye. With his curiosity satisfied, he hustled to sickbay.

Later, a PO3 entered the space where the E-2 had left his experiment and soon found himself drawn to it. Picking it up, he pulled out the scissors, and acid shot into his right eye. He arrived in sickbay in time to be checked by a corpsman and to accompany his shipmate to base medical.

These examples of bad judgment show why it's so important to stay alert to potential hazards. Always check with your supply officer or work-center supervisor for copies of the latest MSDS¹ for hazardous material. These sheets identify the material and describe its chemistry, hazards and

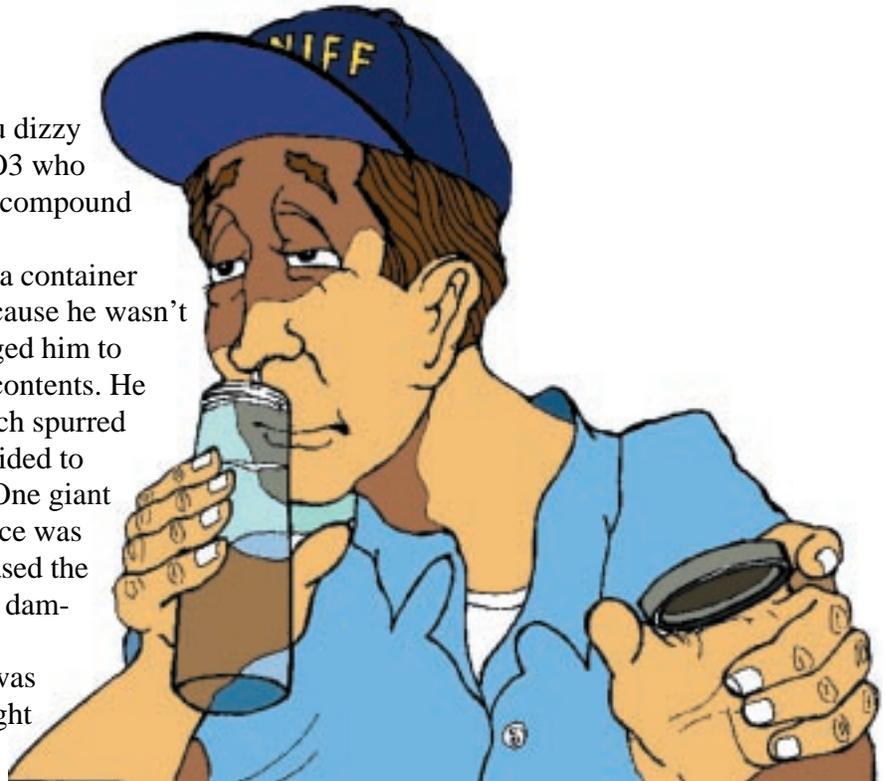


Illustration by DM1(AW) Eulogio Devera

precautions for use and handling. They tell how the chemical can attack your body, and they list emergency first-aid procedures.

If you come across an unfamiliar substance and are intrigued by it, I urge you to read the MSDS. Someone already has researched the answer. All that's required of you is to read and understand it. ☺

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For More Info...



¹Material safety data sheets are on the Hazardous Material Control and Management, Hazardous Material Information Material System in CD-ROM format. To get a copy, write the Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Atlantic, 9625 Moffett Ave., Norfolk, Va. 23511-2784. You also can send e-mail to cdrom@norfolk.navy.mil, phone (757) 445-9192, or fax (757) 445-4842.