

TOOLBOX TALK #7

BATTERY ACID HAZARDS

A variety of safety precautions must be considered when handling batteries and battery acid.

Lead-acid batteries contain sulfuric acid. Only authorized workers should handle them, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety states. CCOHS recommends the following steps for safely working with battery acid:

- Wear personal protective equipment, including splash-proof goggles, gloves and aprons. Other PPE, such as a face shield (with safety goggles), may be necessary depending on the situation.
- Practice extreme caution when pouring concentrated acid to avoid spills or splashes – it can damage clothing and cause serious burns.
- Ensure a safety shower and an eyewash station are installed in battery changing areas.
- Avoid storing acid in hot areas or in direct sunlight.
- Neutralize sulfuric acid spills with a baking soda solution, and then rinse the area with water.



It is important to act immediately if a worker gets sulfuric acid on his or her skin. Flush the contaminated area with moderately warm water for a minimum of 30 minutes, CCOHS states. If after this time irritation continues, flush the area again for another 30 minutes without interruption. Then, remove contaminated clothing under running water. Ensure the victim receives emergency medical care.

If a worker gets sulfuric acid in his or her eye, flush the eye with flowing water for 30 minutes, CCOHS states. It is vital that the flushing is uninterrupted. Avoid rinsing contaminated water back into the eye. Transport the worker to an emergency care facility.