SAFE USE OF PHENOL

Phenol (carbolic acid) is a colorless or pink crystalline solid or viscous liquid with a characteristic sweet, tarry odor. It can affect the body if it is inhaled, ingested, or contacts eyes/ skin.

Hazards with Acute Exposure
- Contact with eyes may cause severe damage and blindness
- Contact with skin may cause severe burns or systemic (whole body) poisoning from any route of exposure, especially after skin absorption

Hazards with Chronic Exposure
- Repeated/ prolonged skin exposure to phenol or vapors from heated phenol may cause headache, nausea, dizziness, difficulty swallowing, diarrhea, vomiting, shock, convulsions, and death
- Phenol affects the central nervous system, liver, and kidneys

Special Safety Precautions
- Phenol must be used with adequate ventilation to minimize inhalation. When heating phenol, use a water bath inside a chemical fume hood. Never heat or melt phenol in an incubator, microwave, drying oven, or similar appliance
- Prevent contact with skin (wear neoprene gloves, lab coat, and chemical resistant apron)
- Skin contact requires immediate washing of the affected area with soap and water (remove and wash contaminated clothes)
- Wear safety glasses/ face shield if splashing may occur
- Store phenol in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area, away from heated surfaces or ignition sources
- When phenol is heated, it can react vigorously with oxidizing agents
- Phenol waste must be placed in a properly labeled glass bottle with a securely sealed lid. You can submit your waste pick up request online

Spills
- Spills of undiluted phenol are serious and must be cleaned immediately
- Small spills of 50 ml or less may be absorbed using paper towels, vermiculite, or other absorbent and placed in a sealed container or double plastic bags and labeled with the UCR hazardous waste label
- If the spill is larger than 50 ml, remove ignition sources, provide adequate ventilation, evacuate lab, close doors, and call EH&S during normal business hours or 9-1-1 after hours

Visit www.ehs.ucr.edu for additional information or call EH&S at 827-5528 if you have any questions.