

# Working With Chemical Drums

Drums vary in size, construction and materials and must be used and stored correctly to protect against chemical leakage.

## Types of Drums

**Open-Head**—used for storing solid materials; has a lid held in place by a bolt ring that's loosened to remove it

**Closed-Head**—used for storing liquid materials; has one or more small bungs on the top, rather than a removable lid

**Metal**—most are steel and are stamped on the bottom with markings that indicate their purpose and type: 17H designates an open-head drum for solids; 17C designates a heavy-gauge, open-head drum for solids; 17E indicates a closed-head drum for liquids

**Fiber**—used for storing solids

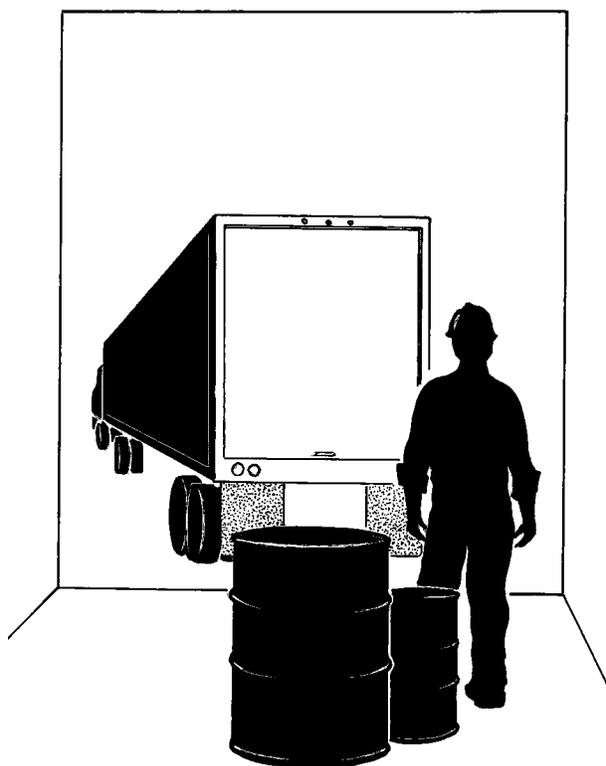
**Plastic**—used for storing certain corrosive liquids

## Handling Drums

- ◆ Before filling a drum, inspect it for dents, cracks and rust, especially around the seams.
- ◆ Before handling a drum, read its label to find out what kind of material it contains.
- ◆ Check the condition of lid gaskets or bungs to make sure they're in good working order.
- ◆ Use mechanical aids, such as a forklift or drum dolly, to move drums.
- ◆ If you must move a drum by yourself, slowly roll it on its rim.
- ◆ Get help to lift a drum if it's on its side.
- ◆ Report missing or illegible labels immediately.
- ◆ Avoid handling a drum if its contents are unknown.
- ◆ Check the condition of a drum before moving it.
- ◆ If a drum has a bulging lid, handle it with extreme caution. It may mean a chemical reaction is going on inside of it.
- ◆ Be careful when handling drums that have been exposed to heat or direct sunlight.

## Storing Drums

- ◆ Store drums in rows in designated storage areas.
- ◆ Leave enough room between rows for access by equipment.
- ◆ Store dangerous chemicals by type.
- ◆ Store flammables and combustible materials away from other materials, especially oxidizers.
- ◆ Ground drums to prevent explosions.



## Drum Leaks

- ◆ A leaking or damaged 55-gallon drum can be put into an 85-gallon drum.
- ◆ Clean spills according to company guidelines.
- ◆ Know your employer's emergency response plan.
- ◆ Read the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for instruction.
- ◆ Know where the emergency eyewash stations and showers are located.