

# LDEO LAB SAFETY GRAM

**06/19/2013**—Recently there was a spill of acetic acid in a laboratory. A researcher, working with a 2.5 liter of acetic acid, accidentally banged the glass container against the lab work table and the container ruptured, releasing the acid onto the counter and floor. Lab personnel acted quickly and prudently opened windows and the door while placing absorbent material onto the spill. They then contacted the LDEO Safety Office. Ultimately, it was determined that further clean up would need to be performed by the Columbia University Hazardous Waste Emergency Response Vendor as the vapors in the room were very strong.



## LESSONS LEARNED:

One of the contributing factors of this spill was that the lab work bench was extremely cluttered with items that did not need to be stored there; thus there was little space to place the chemical container. For instance, Hazardous Waste storage containers do not need to be placed on work benches, but can be stored in secondary containment trays, on the floor (be sure not to create a trip hazard). Additionally, it is worth noting that fume hoods should also be kept clear of clutter and should not be used to store chemical containers or hazardous waste; doing so can adversely affect air flow patterns in the hood and containment of chemical vapors/fumes.

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