



**SPILLTECH**

# **Site Survey Training Manual**



# **SPILLTECH Site Survey Training Outline**

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# **Introduction**

## **1. What is a site survey?**

A site survey combines a “leak and spill” risk analysis of a customer’s facility with proposed solutions and recommended products. The site survey is a very effective sales tool, used to maximize the sales potential at a particular facility.

Whether we realize it or not, each time we visit any production area of a facility we are silently performing a site survey as we visually analyze the leak and spill potential at that facility. Whether you complete a formal written report or simply discuss your findings with the client as you tour the facility, the process of performing the survey and making recommendations is the same.

## **2. Why perform a site survey?**

There are many reasons to perform a site survey. The primary reason is to be certain that all areas of need within that facility are addressed.

As you approach a prospect regarding SpillTech Leak and Spill products, it is important to focus on offering a complete package to address all areas of need. If we simply capitalize on one point of need, for example selling a Spill Kit to satisfy spill response requirements while overlooking the opportunity to sell daily use absorbents or spill containment devices, then much of that site’s sales potential will not be realized.

## **3. How does a customer benefit from a site survey?**

Prospective customers will benefit from our ability to evaluate and identify leak and spill risk areas as well as use our knowledge of matching products to problems areas, thus ensuring that the correct product is offered for each unique situation.

In today’s fast-paced business climate, most prospective customers simply do not want to spend time or money making a change. Some prospective customers will resist change simply because they are not comfortable with change itself. Often, they will remain content using rags, cardboard, and sawdust until they are forced by external factors to do make that change.

Other prospective customers may quickly realize that our product is superior to sawdust, rags and cardboard, and are not reluctant to change, but they do not feel competent training their people on how to use the new products, or they simply feel they don’t have the time to train all the necessary people.

When we offer our assistance in the form of a site survey, we immediately eliminate much of the customer's initial concerns. The customer can be assured we will perform a thorough evaluation, offer the correct product for the task, and train the personnel on proper product usage.

During this process, the customer gains from our expertise and experience while saving valuable time and this helps us build a profitable long-term relationship.

#### **4. How does the SpillTechDistributor benefit from a site survey?**

The site survey tool ensures that all areas of need are addressed and the **maximum** sales potential is achieved. It also serves as a basis for future business opportunity.

For example, should a customer delay a portion of a purchase due to budget constraints you can note your account records to follow-up on the unsold items at the time the budget is being reviewed for the next fiscal year.

The notes you make during your visit to one facility will help you when you visit other firms who possess similar operations, thus reducing the amount of time spent analyzing and recommending products.

Those same notes will also help you to match "new products" to prospective customers; again reducing the amount of time spent identifying potential customers of new products.

## **Site Survey Techniques**

### **1. Before you begin the site survey**

Preparation is the key to a successful site survey. Find out from your contact at the site if safety glasses, hard hats, ear plugs, steel-toed shoes/boots, or any other personal protective devices are required to enter any portion of the facility. You do not want to be excluded from touring any production areas simply because you are not wearing the right thing.

Before you visit the site, review the SpillTech Catalog and Regulations Brochure for the common applications and products used in that type of facility. This step will help prepare you for what you are about to see and will prompt you to look for certain key areas of need.

Knowing the products/applications information will help guide you to a product to offer and at the same time you can offer reassurance to the customer that a certain product is one often used by other customers in that same industry.

Make certain you have the following items as you begin the site survey:

Note Pad  
Clipboard  
Pencil  
Tape Measure  
Marketing literature  
Mat and Sock samples

Most important, do not trust details to memory! Write everything down, drawing maps or diagrams as necessary. If the customer refers to a portion of the facility as “Section 1” or “Area B”, use their terms to identify the different areas of the facility.

This is especially important if you submit a written Site Survey Report to the customer after your visit. This helps the customer precisely identify the area you indicate as needing a product and avoids misunderstandings.

You will also find these notes to be helpful in any future discussions with this customer. You can refer to them to refresh your memory of the facility as well as using the notes to identify areas where new products could be utilized.

## **2. How to determine areas of need and demonstrate the product**

The most effective way to determine all areas of need is to follow the “lifecycle” of liquids used at the facility, making observations, asking questions, and evaluating potential risk factors at each portion of the facility.

The following explanations should help you to make a complete inspection:

### **Liquids enter a facility at the receiving dock.**

How are the liquids received? Small containers, 200-liter drums, 1000-liter IBC, or direct delivery into storage tanks via large tanker trucks?

Each delivery method has risk factors. Small containers might be dropped and rupture. Drums and IBC’s can be mishandled or punctured by forklifts. Tanker truck valves, couplings, and hoses might leak or rupture.

The delivery truck could pose a risk factor as well. There have been cases where a delivery truck ran over an object on the roadway which punctured fuel lines or tanks and the truck arrives at its next stop trailing a steady stream of hazardous liquid which can then enter the storm drains and cause environmental harm.

Look for drains in the loading dock area and ask your customer where the drains lead. If the drains lead to a watercourse or sewage treatment facility, it is imperative to have a means to stop spills from entering the drains and quickly clean up the spillage. Even if the drain leads to a special holding tank, it might be less expensive to use sorbents to

clean up spills than to pay a firm to pump out the holding tank after a small or moderate spill.

You could suggest that a combination of a Spill Kit and Drainblocker placed at the loading dock will enable the customer to quickly block off the drain, stop the spread of the spill, and efficiently clean up the spill.

It is important to work closely with your customer in selecting the size of the Spill Kit. One must always look at the “worst-case scenario” and prepare accordingly, but please keep in mind that it is not always practical to offer a spill kit for the volume of a “worst-case” spill.

As an example, the tanker truck compartment might hold 5000 or 10,000 liters but if a coupling or hose fails perhaps only 20, 50 or 100 liters will spill before the valve can be closed. Therefore it is important to match the Spill Kit to what is likely to occur, knowing that the facility will have other Spill Kits to utilize should the spill situation escalate beyond the capacity of the Spill Kit located at the dock.

**Once unloaded, these liquids are put into storage areas.**

Typically, the containers are moved to a storage room before being consumed in the production areas. The storage room represents the next stop on the site survey. Examine the storage area for potential leak and spill situations.

At this point, there are two product lines to discuss with the customer, Spill Control (Spill Kits, DrainCovers, and SpillCurb) and Spill Containment (SpillPallets and WorkStations).

The scenario for offering a Spill Kit is the same as at the loading dock. Work with your customer to determine what “could” happen and prepare accordingly by offering a Spill Kit that matches the anticipated spill volume and physically fits in the available storage space.

Next, determine if the spill could quickly affect adjacent areas. If the liquid has the potential to cause harm to nearby machinery by moving swiftly through a doorway, a SpillCurb can be deployed in a semi-circle on either side of the doorway to stop the spread of the liquid until the Spill Kit can be utilized.

Check the area for floor drains as well. If drains are located in that storage area, ask where the drains lead. A DrainCover could be offered when the drain leads to a point where spilled liquids could result in environmental harm.

Containers of substances which have the ability to cause significant environmental harm should be stored upon a device which can collect the leaking liquids, such as a SpillPallet or WorkStation. This step ensures that, should a container begin to leak while the area is unattended, the leaking liquid is collected in the SpillPallet or WorkStation and no environmental harm results.

**When removed from storage these liquids are either dispensed into smaller containers or pumped directly into a machine or process.**

When liquids leave the storage area, where do they go? Asking your customer this simple question opens the door to the majority of your opportunities to sell consumable goods such as absorbent mat.

Typical destinations for the containers include:

Horizontal dispensing racks,  
Drum Pump stations,  
Machine reservoirs,  
Or transferred directly into manufacturing processes.

Often, if the liquids are stored drums, facilities will pump or pour the liquids into smaller containers to then take to the next stop. This is a good place to demonstrate how DrumTop Pads can help eliminate messy drips from pumps onto the drum head. Also, look at the floors of the storage area. Mats can be used to clean up drips or spills made during this transfer process). The facility will be cleaner and the risk of a slip and fall hazard is reduced.

**At the point of consumption liquids tend to leak or might spill.**

When you arrive at each of these destinations, note the condition of the containers, machinery, and floor nearby. What do you see?

Rags lying alongside machines or on top of barrels?  
Piles of rags or sawdust under barrel faucets?  
Sawdust-covered walkways?  
Sheets of wet and dirty cardboard?  
Inferior types of matting catching leaks and drips?

Each of these scenarios presents an opportunity to offer a variety of time-saving, efficient absorbent products which will also enhance the safety and appearance of a facility.

Closely examine the areas where rags, cardboard, sawdust, or other materials are already in use. Note the name of each machine or area, the type of liquid in use at that point, and potential hazards or safety risks, along with the type of product you may recommend. Refer to the Mat Selection Guide at the front of the SpillTech Catalog, the Regulations Brochure, or other training materials for product recommendation assistance when necessary.

This portion of the site survey is also your best opportunity to demonstrate the product samples and create a convincing visual presentation.

When you observe a busy production area which has absorbent material already on the floor, preferably along a walkway or beside a machine where a worker must stand constantly, prepare for a demonstration using the samples.

Advise the prospect that many of our customers decided to change to our absorbent mats based on the potential for a slip and fall injury while walking on wet sawdust, cardboard, or on rags in the work area. Explain that using a walk-on absorbent (such as SpillTech Industrial Rugs or FineFiber Mats) makes the floor safer and cleaner to work on and that the liquids can be absorbed in a far more efficient manner.

Move aside some of the existing absorbent and place the mat sample on the floor. Mention that the workspace looks cleaner and better, in addition to being safer than before, and this change will have a positive impact on the workers and any important visitors who tour the facility. Show the prospect how quickly the mat can be removed when saturated and mention the potential for time-savings during clean-up periods (no more back-breaking sweeping!).

This same style of demonstration can also be used when the situation calls for a sock along the side of a machine or a DripPan under a particular leak. Try to demonstrate at least 2 or 3 samples during the site survey itself. Seeing the actual product in place in their facility helps to overcome the prospect's natural reluctance to change and helps to close the sale.

Continue to survey all of the areas within the facility where liquids are consumed, in the production machines, in maintenance shops, in material handling vehicles, and so on. The condition of the floors in each of these areas will signal whether or not absorbent is needed. Constantly check the floors for rags, sawdust, cardboard, or any other absorbent material which could present an opportunity to offer a SpillTech product.

### **Waste Liquids must be collected and disposed.**

At the end of the lifecycle of liquids, they must be collected from machines and processes, placed into containers, and put into storage in preparation for disposal. The waste storage areas often have the same needs as the storage areas visited during the earlier portion of the site survey.

SpillPallets and WorkStations are recommended for drums or containers as they sit in storage. A DrumFunnels should be offered to replace small round funnels often used when pouring wastes into drums. DrumTops can be demonstrated in these areas as well. Spill Kits can be offered to deal with spillage, but if the customer intends to place the waste containers onto Spill Pallets or Decks, usually only a small amount of absorbent mat will be needed to clean-up any spillage which occurs when pouring liquids into containers.



### **3. How to offer the right solution**

Deciding exactly which product to offer for a particular task can prove to be a challenge when you first begin to offer SpillTech products. With some practice, you will quickly adapt to the decision-making process and become confident that you are giving your customer the best product for their needs.

There are several available tools to help you in the decision-making process:

SPILLTECH Mat Selection Guide (Page 3 of Catalog)

SPILLTECH Regulations Brochure

SPILLTECH Compatibility Guide

Polyethylene Compatibility Guide

Understanding how to apply these tools and when to ask certain questions, will help you make the best choice each time. In those special situations when the answers are not clear, be assured that our Technical Services Staff are ready to quickly respond to your questions.

#### **Absorbent Selection**

At this time, please examine the SPILLTECH Mat Selection Guide so that we can perform an exercise and review the logic behind product selection. Note that the Selection Guide is based on a series of questions which lead to the correct product line.

The first question, "Where will the SPILLTECH Absorbent Mat be used?", is easily answered when you are in the facility and can see for yourself where it will be used. However, when discussing a customer's absorbent needs over the telephone or via e-mail, it is very important to ask that question.

The second question, "Type of liquid?", is critical as the different types of absorbent mat have different absorbent properties and it is imperative for performance and safety reasons to establish the characteristic of the liquid. At this point, in many cases you will arrive at the correct product line and all that remains is to match the sorbent form (roll or pad) and size to the needs of the situation.

With regard to the sorbents used inside a factory for oils, coolants, solvents, and water, there are two other questions to help narrow the choices.

The question "How much foot traffic or vehicle traffic?" helps you choose between the highly-absorbent Universal SPILLTECH Mat and the very durable Industrial Rug products. It is at this point that the choice from the chart sometimes may not exactly fit the customer's situation. There will be times when the absorbent will be walked on but the rate of leakage soaks the mat well before the amount of foot traffic creates any durability concerns.

In this case the high-absorbency characteristic of Universal SPILLTECH Mat is more desirable than the high-durability of StitchBonded Mat, Rag Rug, or NeedlePunch Rug and it is correct to offer the less-durable product. There are no clear criteria for making

this decision, so there will be times when it is necessary to perform a trial under "actual-use" conditions by offering the customer samples of two different products to test.

The advantage of this approach is that the customer makes their own decision about which is best, thus closing the sale without any further sales arguments!

SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock Selection is based on a similar set of questions and is used in the same manner as SPILLTECH Absorbent Mat Selection. Having fewer available sock choices makes the sock selection process easier but, there are a few cases where more than one product will perform the same task.

The 3 socks recommended for Oils, Coolants, Solvents, and Water each have a unique property and understanding the differences will make your choices much easier.

The SPILLTECH Corn Cob Absorbent Sock offers the lowest-cost per sock, attracting price-conscious buyers, while the more expensive Poly Filled SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock offers the highest absorbency per sock. If the customer has a regularly-scheduled cleaning program and is likely to throw the sock away before it is saturated, then the Corn Cob SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock is the correct choice.

If the customer expects to leave the sock in place and not discard it until it is saturated, then the highly-absorbent Poly Filled SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock is the correct choice to offer.

The SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock can also be used to absorb leaks and drips but it is primarily intended as a spill response sock because of its ability to stop quickly spreading spills, much like a sand bag is used for flood control.

### **Spill Kit Selection:**

Spill Kit Selection focuses on three primary questions to help you offer your customer the proper Spill Kit. These three questions are:

Type of liquid?

Volume of liquid?

Desired container style?

It is very important to establish the "type of liquid" to ensure chemical compatibility and proper product performance. This step also helps to eliminate a significant portion of the Spill Kit line from consideration, making the overall selection process simpler.

Chemical compatibility is the first "type of liquid" consideration. When you are faced with chemicals you are unfamiliar with, look to the label on the container or information on the customer's MSDS for guidance. Follow the decision-making logic on the Chemical Compatibility Guide.

Following are common examples:

If the container label indicates the material is corrosive or reactive, recommend the HAZ-MAT Spill Kit (featuring the HAZ-MAT SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock).

If the container is located inside the facility and the label indicates the material is a lubricating oil, coolant, or solvent, recommend the Universal Spill Kit (featuring the Poly Filled SPILLTECH Absorbent Sock).

If the container is located outside the facility and the label indicates oil or a fuel, recommend the Oil-Only Spill Kits (featuring the Oil-Only SPILLTECH Absorbent Socks).

There will be times when the customer has a wide range of common coolants, lubricants, and corrosive materials and simply wants one type of Spill Kit for all areas in the facility. In these cases, the HAZ-MAT Spill Kit must be offered to ensure proper chemical compatibility in all spill situations.

On occasion, you will encounter an unusual chemical in a factory and the decision between MRO and HAZ-MAT is unclear. One question to ask your customer is: "Does the liquid react with aluminum?" From a chemical compatibility perspective, the "weakest link" in an MRO Spill Kit is the aluminum clips on the ends of the socks. If the liquid does not react with aluminum, then the MRO Spill Kit should be suitable. Samples of the sock or pillow should be offered to the customer when they wish to perform a trial of our product.

When you are confronted with situations you do not feel comfortable about with Spill Kit selection, our Staff will be happy to assist you with product selection. We do ask that you provide the chemical name, not the "brand name", from the label along with any "CAS numbers" (Chemical Abstract Service identification numbers) shown on the label or as part of the "ingredients" information found on the MSDS so that we can quickly and properly identify the chemical and offer accurate advice.

"Volume of liquid" is simply a matter of matching the expected volume of spillage to the absorbency capacity of the Spill Kit. In some cases, there will be two or more kits which will absorb the necessary amount, so the last deciding factor is based on the "Desired container style".

Simply ask where the customer wishes to store the product and then pick the kit in the container which best meets their storage needs.

### **Storage and Handling Selection:**

DrumFunnels, SpillPallets, and WorkStations are relatively easy to choose during an examination of the areas of need.

DrumFunnels should be offered anytime a cone-shaped metal or plastic funnel is observed in or near a liquid collection container during a site survey. The many features found in a rust-proof, durable, SpillTech DrumFunnel combine to form a product with superior performance and, once these features are shown to the customer, the funnel practically sells itself.

The choice between a 2-drum or 4-drum Spill Pallet and a similarly-sized WorkStation is based on the question, "Do you wish to protect your facility against the release of the drum's entire contents or do you wish to simply provide for 'good housekeeping' in cases of small spillage?"

If the customer is preparing for compliance with container storage regulations or ISO 14001, the best choice is the SpillPallet. The 66 gallon (250-liter) sump provides capacity for the entire contents of a drum, ensuring the spillage will not overflow and harm the facility or the environment.

If the customer is only concerned with "good housekeeping", for example protecting the flooring from drips or splash, and is not in a situation where the device must hold the entire contents of the container, then the WorkStation product is a good choice to offer.

Chemical compatibility questions arise often when offering the SpillPallets and WorkStations. In many cases the question can be answered by referring to the Polyethylene Compatibility Guide.

In cases where the liquid is not listed on the guide, ask what type of container the liquid is stored in. If the container is made of polyethylene, then our polyethylene device should be compatible.

If the container is made of steel or other materials, ask the customer if they use polyethylene containers to store or transport the liquid in their facility. If the customer has a favorable response, then our polyethylene device will be suitable.

When the above is not conclusive, please contact SpillTech. As with Spill Kit selection, we do ask that you provide the chemical name, not the "brand name", from the label along with any "CAS numbers" (Chemical Abstract Service identification numbers) shown on the label or as part of the "ingredients" information found on the MSDS so that we can quickly and properly identify the chemical and offer accurate advice.

Storing "Flammable" liquids on a polyethylene device presents a totally different point to consider. There are instances where the fire authorities will not allow a flammable liquid to be stored on a polyethylene platform due to concerns the polyethylene will melt in the event of fire.

Even when the Compatibility Guide states the liquid is compatible with polyethylene, the customer should consult with local fire authorities before placing a polyethylene storage device into service with a flammable liquid. SpillTech offers steel SpillPallets for those situations when polyethylene is not suitable for flammables.

#### **4. How to overcome “objections”**

We present most prospective customers with a completely new concept of leak and spill response products and, because our ranges of products are unfamiliar to these prospects, there are many challenges to overcome before we can win this business.

The list of challenges may include some of these statements or “objections”:

“These products cost more than what we use now”

“Our facility has never had any spills”

“I do not have the time to determine what products I need”

“I do not know how to pick the proper product for my needs”

“I do not know how to use these products”

“I do not have the time to teach the workers how to use these products”

We will examine each of these objections and offer suggestions for overcoming each one.

**"These products cost much more than what we use now."**

Rags, sawdust, and cardboard all are inexpensive and sometimes "free". How can we compete with "free"? It may at first sound impossible but we should ask "what is the true cost of using cheap absorbents?" and also focus the prospect's attention on what our products will do that theirs cannot to create a convincing argument in our favor.

These cheap absorbents may be inexpensive, but they lack efficiency, they cannot be used with corrosive or reactive liquids, they tend to create an unsightly appearance, and they may increase the chance of "slip and fall" injuries or cause a fire in the facility. These points are the key factors you must stress in order to overcome the "cost" objection of the prospect.

The inefficiency of rags, sawdust, and cardboard means more time spent cleaning up than with a modern absorbent material. Labor costs money, adding to the "true" cost of these cheap absorbents. Large spills cannot be efficiently dealt with using cheap absorbents as their inherent inefficiency creates larger volumes of waste materials, thus increasing labor and disposal costs compared to using efficient socks, mats, and pillows for spill response.

You can use a common daily situation to reinforce the benefits of "efficiency" by pointing out that we could choose to travel to work by walking, bicycle, bus, or train, yet most of us choose to drive a car when a car is a more expensive form of transportation. Why do we do this? Because the car is a much more time-efficient way of travel and our time is worth paying the costs of owning an automobile.

The time-savings realized by using SpillTech Absorbents should be expressed in the same manner. Think of the time they could save by simply picking up socks or mats compared to sweeping and shoveling sawdust. If the machine operators are responsible for cleaning their work areas, they could spend the saved time producing more goods, leading to increased efficiencies throughout the facility. If the maintenance staff is responsible for cleaning up, the amount of time saved means they will have more time to devote to more meaningful maintenance projects at that facility.

If the prospect has corrosive or reactive liquids such as acids, caustics, or oxidizers in their facility, it is very important to stress that these cheap absorbents are incompatible

with such dangerous liquids. In comparison, SpillTech HAZ-MAT Absorbents can quickly absorb nearly all liquids safely and effectively.

Cheap absorbents such as rags, sawdust or cardboard also lack the ability to remove an oil spill from a watercourse, storm sewer, or body of water. SpillTech Oil-Only Absorbents absorb only oils, fuels, and hydrocarbon-based liquid while floating on water, allowing the customer to effectively clean up an oil spill on water.

Having proper spill response absorbents ensures that spills can be quickly and efficiently controlled, preventing or limiting harm to the environment. If a spill could not be dealt with using cheap absorbents and harm resulted to the environment, the government penalties and negative publicity would make the use of a "cheap" absorbent seem very expensive.

During the site survey you can create a powerful visual impression simply by moving aside some oily rags and placing a mat or sock sample in their place. The SpillTech absorbent immediately improves the appearance of the area.

When this prospect shows the facility to their customers, investors, or bankers, they desire to present the best possible appearance to these important visitors. The workers will certainly appreciate the cleaner appearance of their workplace and this improvement usually leads to increased morale among workers which can also lead to productivity gains.

Also, talk of how we cope with spills at home. If we spilled cooking oil on our kitchen floor, would we clean it up with sawdust or cardboard? Of course not. We would use a faster, cleaner absorbent. Why not do this at work as well?

Oily rags, sawdust, and cardboard can also present a safety concern when used in areas of constant foot traffic as they can become quite slippery and may lead to accidents. Cheap absorbents become expensive when a worker is injured or hospitalized due to a "slip and fall" accident caused by walking on oily sawdust or a slippery rag or sheet of cardboard.

The cheap absorbents also introduce an element of risk into a facility. Sawdust and cardboard are very combustible and have caused fires in factories. Piles of sawdust also pose the risk of spontaneous combustion as well as providing a home to mice and rats.

We are constantly contacted by sawdust or cardboard users who wish to switch to modern absorbents because they have experienced fires or because the fire inspector or their insurance company insist they must stop spreading combustible materials like sawdust over their floors. These are key points to stress to overcome price objections. What good is cheap absorbent if it causes a disastrous fire?

When you encounter a customer who has good recycling practices, mention the fact that most SpillTech Absorbents can be wrung out, and the oil recycled, thus reducing the volume of "waste" leaving the facility. It is either very difficult or very inefficient to attempt to reclaim oils from rags, sawdust, and cardboard.

In food processing facilities it should be noted that many of our absorbent materials are polypropylene, a plastic which does not provide a food source for bacteria or molds and are a much more appropriate choice to these contamination-sensitive industries. Sweeping up sawdust creates dust particles which can contaminate the food product or any goods and equipment used in that area. Cleaning up using SpillTech Socks and Mats will not create such unsightly or unsanitary conditions.

**"Our facility has never had any spills."**

Perhaps that is true, but the key arguments to pose is that one must prepare for potential spills either to comply with Federal or State environmental regulations, achieve ISO 14001 certification, avoid the huge costs of spill remediation and governmental penalties, or to avoid the negative publicity caused by environmental damages.

When a customer is not swayed by these points, and insists they do not need spill kits because they have never experienced any significant spill, we can easily draw a comparison between being prepared for spills and being prepared for fires.

Ask the customer if the facility has ever suffered a significant fire. If they reply "No", point out the fact that the facility has fire extinguishers, sprinklers, or any other fire detection and suppression devices you observed during your tour of the facility. Draw a parallel between being prepared for a fire and being prepared for a spill. In either case, the lack of proper preparation can have disastrous results.

If the response to the question is "Yes", ask if they used their own fire control equipment before the fire brigade arrived. They are certain to answer "Yes" again, and we can again compare fire control and spill control measures to convince them of the needs for proper spill response equipment.

We could also argue that they purchase fire extinguishers to comply with fire codes and to satisfy insurance policy requirements, and that properly controlling a combustible or flammable liquid spill helps to prevent fires caused by vapors reaching an ignition source, thus helping to satisfy insurance policy requirements.

**"I do not have the time to determine what products I need."**

This objection is most easily solved by visiting the customer's facility and performing a site survey. Unfortunately, there will be times when you are talking over the telephone to a distant prospect and a visit simply is not feasible.

Explain that you will be quite happy to walk them through the process and ask which machines or processes cause the biggest leak or spill "problems". Then, use the appropriate question from the absorbent selection guides to guide you to the best product for the situation. The customer has the knowledge we need to make the choices, it is simply our task to draw the information out and act upon it.

**"I do not know how to pick the proper product for my needs."**

Again, this is most easily overcome by visiting the customer facility and taking on that task for the customer. Again, this approach is not always feasible. At this point we would simply use the questions in the absorbent selection guides to make the decision-making process much easier for the customer.

Providing customers with copies of these selection guides will help these sites quickly and competently make their choices in the future, so we would encourage their use at every opportunity.

**"I do not know how to use these products."**

This is another case where a site visit will provide the best results. While it is possible to teach proper use to managers or decision-makers over the telephone, it is more desirable to demonstrate the product in person so that the customer can gain the confidence of being taught in person.

In addition, while training managers and supervisors is often necessary to close a sale, be aware that if the information is not given directly to the end user then the sales results will not be optimized. This point leads us to the next "objection".

**"I do not have the time to teach the workers how to use these products."**

This is another example of how a visit to a facility is very important. Most managers and supervisors will realize the benefits of using modern absorbent materials, but simply do not have the time in their schedules to train the various work areas on proper use techniques.

When you offer to visit the facility and personally train the workers on proper use of absorbents, your offer will nearly always be accepted and this eliminates the objection altogether.

## **5. Post-sale training**

You contact a facility regarding the SpillTech program, schedule a site survey, tour the facility, demonstrate the products to the decision-makers and convince them to switch to SpillTech Absorbents, Spill Kits, and Storage and Handling products. You receive their initial order, fulfill the order and move on to the next prospect, happy that your efforts were rewarded.

But were your efforts "maximized"?

Without training the workers who will actually consume the absorbent products, you are not likely to achieve the maximum results from this customer. When we examine



“repeat” sales from customers for whom we performed a site survey without training end-users, we often find the repeat sales are sluggish and minimal.

We have encountered situations where supervisors and managers were convinced to purchase the product but the products were never actually consumed because the uneducated end users did not feel confident about how to use the absorbent product. The end-user does not wish to receive a reprimand for "doing something wrong", so our product sits unused on a shelf in the storage area, and our efforts to sell the product do not produce the desired “repeat” sales.

It is critical to show the end-users how to actually use the absorbent product and how to tell when the product needs changed, so that they are aware of what the product is, what the product will do, and feel comfortable using it. Only then will you realize a steady stream of repeat sales.

Training a customer to properly use absorbents is fairly simple.

Mat pads and rolls are nearly self-explanatory. You simply clear away whatever absorbent material was used in the past and place the mat pad on the floor, or roll-out the mat roll just as you would unroll a section of carpet.

There may be times when it is necessary to use tape to secure a long length of mat to the flooring and this can be done either by using duct tape around the perimeter or by using “double-sided” carpet tape underneath the mat roll. It may be necessary to use a solvent to clean the flooring so that the tape will adhere.

Changing the mat pad or roll is simply a matter of deciding when it is saturated or has begun to show too much physical wear from foot traffic.

It is worth noting to the customer that if they discard Universal SPILLTECH Mat before it is close to saturation simply because it has deteriorated from physical wear, that they might be better served using one of our more durable Industrial Rugs, such as StitchBonded Mat. If StitchBonded Mat is not durable enough, we can always offer Rag Rug or NeedlePunch Rug.

Training a customer how to use a sock is relatively simple as well. Again, the first step is to remove the old absorbent materials from the flooring and place the sock in the area of need.

Explain to the workers that the sock must be in contact with the flooring in order to work efficiently. Liquids will enter the fabric outer covering and be pulled into the inner absorbent material. For this reason the outer fabric will look “wet” long before the sock is actually “full”. The sock is saturated when you see the fabric is soaked and you notice small amounts of liquid starting to pass under the sock.

At this point you simply dispose of the old sock and place a new one on the floor, sliding it through the small amount of liquid left by the old sock to absorb what was left behind.

There are some simple rules to teach customers regarding use of Absorbent Socks:

Remember to properly overlap the socks by 6 inches (15cm) when using several socks in-line.

Do not place socks on top of rags or sawdust or any other materials. Clean away the “old” first and place the sock onto the flooring.

Do not place socks in “side-by-side” rows to try to control large machine leaks. The first sock will block the liquid from reaching the second sock, possibly creating a large pool of liquid which may divert to unwanted areas.

Do not place socks on top of each other. The sock on top will remain essentially dry.

Do not cut the socks open and pour the absorbent onto the flooring. This negates your efforts to achieve a “clean workplace” and also adds time and labor during clean-up.

Selling Spill Kits requires on-site training. After all, the Spill Kit is merely a “tool” and if the purchaser is not educated on how to use this tool, the chances are they will do something wrong and this will most certainly have negative results.

We hear stories of untrained end users cutting open a sock and pouring the contents onto the floor to soak up a leak or spill. We also hear of untrained customers opening a Spill Kit and simply dumping the contents of the Kit into a spill, rather than deploying the products properly. Both situations arose simply because the end users were not trained how to use the product and simply did not know any better method.

It is often necessary to perform a “mock spill” at the facility during the early stages of your efforts to convince the customer to purchase Spill Kits. Again, do not simply assume that because decision-makers were shown how to properly use a sock to control spreading liquids that this information will be passed along to the workers.

We consider on-site spill response training to be a very important part of the “post-sale” training. Offering to train the workers on how to use the Spill Kit will help to eliminate many of the customer’s objections. After all, you are saving time for the decision makers and they will certainly appreciate that.

The workers will also appreciate the fact that they are receiving first-hand training from the “experts” and this will boost their confidence and allow the opportunity to ask any questions they may have regarding the Spill Kit product. Training will certainly improve spill response performance, and this will help protect the facility and the environment when the spill does occur.

Never underestimate the need for training. It is a very worthy investment of your time and also helps to establish a firm relationship with the customer.

Storage and Handling products need only a small amount of training. Usually it is only necessary to show the workers what the product is meant to do and this is all usually self-explanatory.

One point we must stress during Storage and Handling training is that spilled liquids **must** be cleaned from the sump of the SpilPallet or WorkStation as quickly as possible after the spill is detected. It is unwise to allow liquids to sit in the sump for long periods of time as the spilled liquid might give off harmful or flammable vapors.

In some cases, long-term exposure of the sump to the spilled liquid may cause some deterioration of the sump. When the spilled liquid is cleaned out quickly, the possibility of sump deterioration is minimized. This is especially important when the Polyethylene Compatibility Guide indicates the spilled liquid has a “short-term” exposure rating.

## **Tips to get the best results from a site survey**

### **Make certain you understand what the prospect expects from your visit.**

Explain the benefits of a full site survey and schedule the visit for a time when your contact can grant a full tour. There are times when the prospect merely wants to meet with you in person, discuss the products in their office, and request a quotation. They do not have the time to give you a full tour of the facility and your ability to maximize the sales opportunity is compromised.

When you arrive at the facility and the prospect is not able to give a full tour, try to determine why and continue to explain the benefits of the site survey and all of the services we are willing to offer. If they do not have the time to conduct the tour, ask if they would schedule your tour with preferably a Supervisor from Safety, Environmental, or Maintenance Departments.

### **Be sure to meet Safety, Environmental, and Maintenance persons during the site survey.**

These people will have a broad knowledge of the entire facility, ensuring that you visit all the areas of need. These positions in the facility are also excellent contacts to develop a relationship with, as they will be personally interested in our range of products and have decision-making influence which can be very beneficial toward your future sales efforts.

Discussing the program only with Purchasing persons usually does not produce the desired results as the Purchasing people care primarily about the cost of goods they buy for the facility. They will not be very interested in Safety or Environmental issues. They will simply look at the goods we offer as costing much more than they currently spend and present the “costs more” objection we discussed earlier.

Purchasing contacts would like for us to show them a chart showing savings they would realize by switching to our products. Due to the sheer number of variable factors in each facility, we cannot provide money-saving data for each and every situation in advance.

The best approach is for the customer to trial the use of the absorbents while keeping track of time saved. We have used this approach in the past with good results. The customer measures their own result and that information is far more convincing than any numbers we might provide or predict.

We can say that many larger customers have saved tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars per year on time, labor, and waste disposal costs simply by switching to our products, but again, this is something best left to that customer to measure for themselves after they have several months experience with our products.

**Ask "open-ended" questions about the work areas you visit.**

When you see an area of need, ask about the type of work performed in that area and what type of liquid used. This line of questioning is useful for product selection and often the answer will reveal a particular "problem" in that area that we can help with. People enjoy talking with visitors about their workplace and often provide insights which we can use later in our sales discussions.

Asking questions which can be answered with only a "yes" or "no" does not usually provide insight about the customer's expectation of our product and this could lead to misunderstandings later.

**Identify potential financial constraints and purchasing habits.**

When the customer agrees to a site survey, they may have already decided the size of the budget they are willing to spend in order to begin this new program. If we do not understand any particular budget constraints it is possible that our quotation will greatly exceed their budget. When we do understand any preset budgets, we can focus on the key areas of need and keep our quotation within those limits.

Purchasing habits vary from facility to facility. It is possible you could meet with the head of the Safety or Environmental Departments and convince them to try the product, only to learn the Plant Manager or Head of Purchasing is the one who has final approval and we must then convince that person in addition to those we have already worked with.

**Make certain you are adequately prepared at all times.**

Determine what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is needed for your visits, items such as hard hat, safety glasses, hearing protection, safety footwear, and so on, and have those items with you at all times during sales calls. You never know when a request for a visit to offer a quote may turn into an opportunity to tour the facility and you do not want to miss this opportunity for lack of PPE.

Takes notes, draw maps, write down everything you can about the facility as you tour. By the time you have left the facility, you may forget important details about much of what you have seen and those details are crucial.

## **Practice Site Surveys and product demonstrations.**

It is very important to practice a site survey, just as you should practice any Spill Response demonstrations, before you visit your first facility. Use your own branch office, or a nearby business owned by a friend or relative, in order to practice your absorbent and spill control techniques.

Practice with "hands-on" elements of your presentation ensures that you will be totally prepared when the time arises to demonstrate the product.

We hope the information we provided helps you have the best possible results when calling on customers in person. Please share with us your success stories so that we may all benefit from your customer contact experiences.

Should you or your customers have any questions regarding our products, please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How do I dispose of used absorbent?**

SpillTech does not recommend specific disposal methods, as the specific method of disposal is related to the hazard posed by the absorbed liquid and the allowable disposal methods vary depending on national legislation and local availability of disposal facilities.

The best method to answer the question is to ask the customer what absorbent they presently use and how they dispose of that material in accordance with national legislation.

In most cases, the used SpillTech absorbent may be disposed of in the same manner.

### **2. How much absorbent will we consume per month/year?**

Ask if the customer uses a pre-determined schedule of general housekeeping or plans to only discard the absorbent when it is saturated.

If they clean area work on a pre-determined schedule, then the calculation would be based on number of socks, mats, etc., placed in the area multiplied by the frequency of the clean-up schedule.

If they plan to leave the absorbents sitting until fully saturated, ask the customer to determine how much liquid is used to "top-off" (refill) the machine during the course of a day, week, or month. Knowing the volume of leakage enables you to offer an estimated timeframe for changing the absorbent, based on the amount each mat, sock, etc., will absorb.

### **3. Can we reuse the absorbent?**

SpillTech absorbents are marketed as “single-use” absorbents. SPILLTECH Mat products and SPILLTECH® Absorbent Socks can be wrung out and reused to some degree, but the absorbent capacity is diminished by approximately 50% after wringing. The costs of labor involved in collecting the used absorbents, wringing out the liquid, and placing the absorbent back into service may negate the savings realized by reusing the product.

**IMPORTANT:** SpillTech recommends against any attempt to wring absorbents exposed to flammable liquids, corrosive liquids, or oxidizers. SpillTech also recommends against reuse of HAZ-MAT SPILLTECH® Absorbents based on personal safety concerns.

### **Is the absorbent compatible with my liquid?**

Check the SpillTech compatibility guide for Universal or HazMat applications, which lists the range of liquids we have tested and found to be satisfactory.

The Universal absorbents should be chosen carefully as several of the sock products have aluminum clips, which could be degraded by, or react with, strong corrosive or reactive liquids.

As previously discussed, the best way to determine the compatibility of Universal absorbents is to ask the customer if their liquid “reacts” with paper or aluminum. While the Universal SPILLTECH Pads and Rolls have the same chemical compatibility as the HAZ-MAT SPILLTECH products, the Universal socks and loose absorbents such as Lite-Zorb®, do not have the ability to absorb corrosive or oxidizing chemicals.

As the customer best knows the properties of their liquids, it is safe to rely on their knowledge to answer the inevitable compatibility questions. In addition, we offer samples of absorbents to customers who wish to perform trials to confirm any assumptions.

The Oil-Only and Stat-Mat ranges of absorbents are not known to react with any liquid refined from petroleum. The only limitations on absorbency in this range are high-viscosity oils/fuels such as a “Number 6” Fuel oil, bunker oil, and weathered crude oil. Should you encounter these thick liquids, we offer Pom Poms for use with thick form of petroleum.

Should you require assistance at any time with a compatibility question, please contact your SpillTech sales rep for guidance.

### **4. Will the absorbent make my liquids less corrosive, less toxic, or less flammable?**

With the exception of the absorbent products specifically marketed for neutralization purposes, SpillTech absorbents will take on the properties and characteristics of whatever

liquid is absorbed. Therefore all measures must be taken as if you were handling the liquid itself. Absorbents do not make the liquid any less hazardous or flammable. Always refer to the MSDS for the absorbed liquid for specifics.

## **5. What are the temperature limits for SPILLTECH absorbents?**

As each material used to make SPILLTECH absorbents has different physical properties, the MSDS for the specific product should be consulted for guidance.

SPILLTECH Mat products receive this question more often than any other range. SPILLTECH Mat begins to show signs of softening at approximately 200°F (100°C) and has a melting point of 320°F (160°C). If pressure is exerted against the mat, the fibers may bond together and appear to melt at temperatures well below 320°F (160°C). As we cannot predict the outcome of each application, sample pieces should be tested to determine suitability.

### **Will SPILLTECH absorbents burn easily if exposed to hot sparks or flame?**

Again, as each material used to make SPILLTECH absorbents has different physical properties, the MSDS for the specific product should be consulted for guidance.

SPILLTECH Mat has a melting point of 320°F (160°C) and an autoignition point of 824°F (440°C). Unused SPILLTECH Mat product will melt, but not support continued combustion, well before igniting, should it come into contact with molten sparks or high temperature objects.

**IMPORTANT:** If the SPILLTECH Mat product has absorbed a flammable or combustible liquid, it should be assumed that combustion of the liquid may occur in the presence of molten sparks or open flame.

## **6. Can “Oil-Only” products be used to filter oily water?**

SPILLTECH Oil-Only absorbent products, in general, are meant to remove floating, non-emulsified oils from water. These products are not intended for applications requiring an emulsified oil/water mix to flow through the absorbent material so that the oil is removed from the water. Should a customer wish to perform a trial of such a use, we will provide samples but we make no guarantee of a good result.

## **7. What do I do when asked about SpillPallet/WorkStation compatibility and the chemical is not listed on the Polyethylene Compatibility Guide?**

This question can often be answered by relying on the customer’s knowledge of their chemical. Ask the customer if the substance is transported or stored in polyethylene containers.

In general, if the substance is transported or stored in a polyethylene container, the SpillTech SpillPallet or WorkStation product should be suitable. If the substance is transported in a steel container, we should strongly urge the customer to consult with the chemical supplier for guidance before placing the SpillPallet or WorkStation into service.

SpillTech offers specially-treated polyethylene storage and handling products, known as “Poly Plus” for use with certain polyethylene-degrading solvents and we also offer steel containment devices for situations involving flammable liquids.

If you and your customer are not 100% certain of compatibility issues, please contact your SpillTech sales rep for assistance.

### **8. How should I interpret weight ratings when my customer wants to place large, heavy objects on a SpillPallet or WorkStation?**

Weight ratings expressed in SpillTech catalogs and literature apply to Uniformly Distributed Loads (UDL) such as drums and other flat-bottom containers. Concentrating large weight factors onto a small portion of the grating surface may result in deformation or stress cracking of the grating surface.

Please obtain as much information as you can regarding the size measurements, shape, and weight of the container, especially the dimensions of the parts of the container which will actually contact the grating surface, and forward those details to your SpillTech sales rep. We will review the information with our engineering staff and offer guidance.

### **9. What are the temperature limits for SpillPallets and WorkStations?**

The maximum recommended service temperature for SpillTech Storage and Handling products is 175°F (80°C). Above that temperature, the polyethylene softens, leading to structural deformities and possible collapse of the unit.

Caution should be used when a customer wants to attach a drum heater to a drum stored on a polyethylene SpillPallet or WorkStation, as the combination of heat and the weight of the drum will cause the plastic grates to deform and, in extreme cases, melt. The grating surface must be insulated from direct contact with the heated container.

The minimum recommended service temperature is -22°F (-30°C). Caution should be exercised when loading drums onto the unit at temperatures below freezing as cold temperature tend to make the plastic somewhat brittle and more likely to suffer stress cracks from impacts.



## **Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time to review this valuable information. We hope that you have learned a great deal about selling SpillTech products and we invite your questions regarding any information you or your customers are uncertain about, or any topics not covered by this training material.

Wishing you the best possible sales results,

Your SpillTech Sales Team