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Free CI Chart Helps Prevent Dangerous Mixtures Involving Sodium Hypochlorite

ARLINGTON, Va. (April 15, 2009) -- The Chlorine Institute, Inc. (CI) has published online an updated version of its free "Sodium Hypochlorite Incompatibility Chart," which provides guidance to avoid accidental mixing of sodium hypochlorite that could lead to dangerous conditions.

The chart may be downloaded in PDF format by visiting www.chlorineinstitute.org: click on the "About Chemical Stewardship" button on the left side of the home page, and from the drop-down menu click on "Sodium Hypochlorite Stewardship."

"Sodium hypochlorite – or bleach as it is often called – should not be mixed with any other chemical unless adequate engineering controls are in place and personal protective equipment is used," said Shane Fast, CI vice president of customer stewardship and technical services. "Accidental mixing may cause dangerous conditions that could result in injury to people and damage to property or the environment."

Incompatible materials addressed in the chart are: (1) acids and acidic compounds; (2) chemicals and cleaning compounds containing ammonia; (3) organic chemicals and chemical compounds; (4) metals; (5) hydrogen peroxide; (6) reducing agents, and (7) oxidizing agents. Also, sodium hypochlorite should not be exposed directly to sunlight or ultraviolet light.

"Common locations where accidental mixing of incompatible chemicals can occur include containment systems, drains, sinks, unloading piping and warehouse storage areas," Fast said. "The chart covers the more common industrial chemicals where incompatible mixing can occur, and explains briefly the potential hazards that can result. It is intended primarily for industrial sodium hypochlorite users."

Sodium hypochlorite is used for water and wastewater disinfection; a weak solution is used for household bleach. Notification about this updated chart is part of a new CI initiative to provide a vast majority of its informative technical resources free to help improve chlor-alkali safety and security. Twenty-six other publications may be downloaded without charge from CI's online "Bookstore," including 19 of potential interest to water operations.

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The Chlorine Institute, Inc. (CI) is a 220-member, not-for-profit trade association of chlor-alkali producers worldwide, as well as packagers, distributors, users and suppliers. Arlington, Va.-based CI's mission is to promote safety and the protection of human health and the environment in the manufacture, distribution and use of chlorine, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and sodium hypochlorite, plus the distribution and use of hydrogen chloride. CI's North American Producer members account for more than 98 percent of the total chlorine production capacity of the United States, Canada and Mexico.