

Should I Purchase This Chemical?

Has your state or school district started to prohibit the use of certain chemicals in your science laboratory? This is a growing problem! Banning chemicals from the school science laboratory without giving thought to how often the chemical is used, or its educational value and hazard level, is similar to banning a textbook from the classroom. Teaching professionals must have available to them every teaching tool possible to educate our nation's young people. Flinn Scientific has adopted the philosophy that:

“Chemicals in any form can be safely stored, handled or used if the physical, chemical and hazardous properties are fully understood and the necessary precautions, including the use of proper safeguards and personal protective equipment, are observed.”

Important Questions Should Be Asked Before Purchasing a Chemical.

1 What is the relative hazard level of the chemical?

Is the chemical water- or air-reactive? Is it corrosive, flammable or hazardous by inhalation? Is the chemical irritating to body tissue or carcinogenic? In other words, how can this chemical hurt me?

2 How often is the chemical used in laboratory activities such as experiments and/or demonstrations?

Is the chemical commonly used in a high school setting?

3 What is the educational value of using the chemical?

What specific topic or lesson does the chemical help teach or illustrate? If the chemical is commonly used in other laboratory activities, you can generally say it has educational value. If the chemical is infrequently used and extremely hazardous, then we suggest you review the specific laboratory activity to judge its educational value for yourself. Further investigation may identify a less hazardous substitute. Only you, the teaching professional, can ultimately decide the chemical's educational value.

4 Have I used this substance before?

Am I familiar with the use of the chemical? Have I tried the experiment before? Do I feel comfortable using this chemical?

Remember, try all experiments and demonstrations first before using them in the classroom.

5 Is my laboratory facility equipped for the safe use of this chemical?

Do I have the correct type and size fire extinguisher? Do I have an eyewash? Is my room properly ventilated, etc.?

6 How will I dispose of this chemical?

Will this chemical require special disposal procedures and does my school have a waste disposal program in place? Will the chemical have to be disposed of properly by a licensed hazardous waste disposal company?

If you have trouble answering one or more of these six questions, call us. Our technical staff of chemists will be more than happy to give you expert advice!