Standard Operating Procedure

Potassium

*This is an SOP template and is not complete until: 1) lab specific information is entered into the box below 2) lab specific protocol/procedure is added to the protocol/procedure section and   
3) SOP has been signed and dated by the PI and relevant lab personnel.*

Print a copy and insert into your   
*Laboratory Safety Manual* and *Chemical Hygiene Plan*.   
Refer to instructions for assistance.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Department:** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Date SOP was written:** | Click here to enter a date. |
| **Date SOP was approved by PI/lab supervisor:** | Click here to enter a date. |
| **Principal Investigator:** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Internal Lab Safety Coordinator/Lab Manager:** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Lab Phone:** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Office Phone:** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Emergency Contact:** | Click here to enter text. |
| *(Name and Phone Number)* |
| **Location(s) covered by this SOP:** | Click here to enter text. |
| *(Building/Room Number)* |

**Type of SOP:** ☐ Process ☒Hazardous Chemical ☐ Hazardous Class

**Purpose**

Potassium is a soft, silver-grey alkali metal with atomic number 19. It is very reactive with water, producing flammable gases that can ignite spontaneously. It readily oxidizes when exposed to air. It is corrosive and can cause burns to the skin, eyes, respiratory tract, and gastrointestinal tract with severe or permanent damage. Potassium cations are vital to the function of living organisms. They are important in neuron function and producing an electrochemical gradient across the cell membrane. Potassium metal has very few applications, but potassium compounds can be found in agricultural fertilizers, gold-mining, electroplating, inks, dyes, explosives, and fireworks.

**Physical & Chemical Properties/Definition of Chemical Group**

CAS#: 7440-09-7

Class: **Water reactive, highly flammable, corrosive, carcinogen**

Molecular Formula: K

Form (physical state): Solid

Color: Grey

Boiling point: 760-770 °C

**Potential Hazards/Toxicity**

Potassium is very reactive with water, producing flammable gases that can ignite spontaneously. It readily oxidizes when exposed to air. Potassium needs to be handled under inert gas and protected from moisture. It is corrosive and can cause burns to the skin, eyes, respiratory tract, and gastrointestinal tract with severe or permanent damage. Potassium may be harmful if inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin. It causes gastrointestinal tract burns with possible perforation to esophagus and stomach. It is extremely destructive to the tissue of the mucous membranes and upper respiratory tract. May cause coughing, wheezing, laryngitis, shortness of breath, headache, nausea, and vomiting.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

**Respirator Protection**

Use a full-face respirator with multi-purpose combination (US) respirator cartridges.

Respirators should be used only under any of the following circumstances:

* As a last line of defense (i.e., after engineering and administrative controls have been exhausted).
* When Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) has exceeded or when there is a possibility that PEL will be exceeded.
* Regulations require the use of a respirator.
* An employer requires the use of a respirator.
* There is potential for harmful exposure due to an atmospheric contaminant (in the absence of PEL).
* As PPE in the event of a chemical spill clean-up process.

Lab personnel intending to use/wear a respirator mask must be trained and fit-tested by ORS and should contact occhealt@uga.edu. This is a UGA requirement described in more detail in the [UGA Respiratory Protection Plan](https://esd.uga.edu/sites/default/files/respiratoryprotection.pdf) and supported by the [Office of Research Occupational Health and Safety Program](https://research.uga.edu/ohsp/).

**Hand Protection**

Handle with gloves. Nitrile gloves are recommended.

NOTE: Consult with your preferred glove manufacturer to ensure that the gloves you plan on using are compatible with potassium.

Refer to glove selection chart from the links below:

<http://www.ansellpro.com/download/Ansell_8thEditionChemicalResistanceGuide.pdf>

OR

<http://www.allsafetyproducts.biz/page/74172>

OR

<http://www.showabestglove.com/site/default.aspx>

OR

<http://www.mapaglove.com/>

**Eye Protection**

ANSI-approved, tight-fitting safety glasses/goggles. Face shields are recommended.

**Skin and Body Protection**

Flame-resistant lab coats, preferably made of antistatic material, must be worn and be appropriately sized for the individual and buttoned to their full length. Laboratory coat sleeves must be of sufficient length to prevent skin exposure while wearing gloves. Full-length pants and close-toed shoes must be worn at all times by all individuals that are occupying the laboratory area. The area of skin between the shoe and ankle should not be exposed.

**Hygiene Measures**

Avoid contact with skin, eyes and clothing. Wash hands before breaks and immediately after handling the product.

**Engineering Controls**

Potassium should be used in a glove box or in a closed system in a certified chemical fume hood.

**First Aid Procedures**

**If inhaled**

Move person into fresh air. If not breathing, give artificial respiration. If breathing is difficult, give oxygen. Consult a physician.

**In case of skin contact**

Wash off with soap and plenty of water for at least 15 minutes while removing contaminated clothing. Consult a physician.

**In case of eye contact**

Rinse thoroughly with plenty of water for at least 15 minutes lifting upper and lower eyelids and removing contact lenses. Consult a physician. Continue rinsing eyes during transport to hospital.

**If swallowed**

Do NOT induce vomiting. Never give anything by mouth to an unconscious person. Rinse mouth with water. Consult a physician.

**Special Handling and Storage Requirements**

**Precautions for safe handling:** Avoid inhalation and ingestion. Avoid contact with skin, eyes, and clothing. Avoid dust formation. Provide adequate exhaust ventilation. Use spark-proof tools and explosion-proof equipment. Keep away from sources of ignition - No smoking.

**Conditions for safe storage:** Keep container tightly closed in a dry and well-ventilated area. Never allow contact with water. Incompatible with oxidizing agents, carbon oxides, acids, and halogens. Handle and store under inert gas. Store in corrosives area. Store locked up.

**Spill and Accident Procedure**

**Chemical Spill Dial 911**

**24-7 On-Call Response to Research, Environment, Health or Safety Concerns Dial 2-5561 from a campus phone or 706-542-5561 from a non-campus line.**

**Spill** – Follow the procedures set out in the [UGA Chemical and Laboratory Safety Manual.](http://research.uga.edu/docs/units/safety/manuals/Chemical-Laboratory-Safety-Manual.pdf)

[If there are any chemical-specific protocols for responding to a spill, insert them here or mark “none”:]

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# **Medical Emergency Dial 911**

**Life Threatening Emergency, After Hours, Weekends and Holidays** – Dial **911** or the emergency phone numbers listed at the beginning of the UGA Chemical and Laboratory Safety Manual.

*Note: All incidents that result in an injury or property damage must be reported to ORS / ESD using a University Incident/Accident Report.*

**Non-Life-Threatening Emergency** – Follow the instructions in the UGA Chemical and Laboratory Safety Manual.

*Note: All incidents that result in an injury or property damage must be reported to ORS / ESD using a University Incident/Accident Report.*

**Decontamination/Waste Disposal Procedure**

**For general hazardous waste disposal procedures, see Appendix H of the UGA Chemical and Laboratory Safety Manual.**

**Chemical Specific Procedures: [to be inserted or marked as “none”]**

Wearing proper PPE, sweep up or shovel. Do not flush with water. Collect with an electrically-protected vacuum cleaner or by wet-brushing and place in container for disposal.

**Safety Data Sheet (SDS) Location**

UGA personnel can access Online SDS through a link in the upper left corner of the ESD home page (<https://esd.uga.edu>) and logging in by using their UGA email user name and password.

**Protocol/Procedure (Add lab specific Protocol/Procedure here)**

Click here to enter text.

**NOTE**

Any deviation from this SOP requires approval from PI.

**Documentation of Training** (signature of all users is required)

* Prior to conducting any work with potassium, designated personnel must provide training to his/her laboratory personnel specific to the hazards involved in working with this substance, work area decontamination, and emergency procedures.
* The Principal Investigator must provide his/her laboratory personnel with a copy of this SOP and access to the SDS provided by the manufacturer.
* The Principal Investigator must ensure that his/her laboratory personnel have attended appropriate laboratory safety training or refresher training within the last 12 months.

**Principal Investigator SOP Approval**

Print name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Approval Date:

I have read and understand the content of this SOP:

|  |  |  |
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| **Name** | **Signature** | **Date** |
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