



Risk Management Solutions



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Proper Chemical Management Drives Pool Safety

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Introduction

Ensuring proper chemical management is key during the summer to provide swimmers with safe access to municipal pools. These community treasures foster recreation, fitness and connection, but the chemicals that keep their waters pristine—chlorine and muriatic acid—carry risks, if not overseen carefully. When mismanaged, they can lead to spills, fires, toxic vapor releases or injuries, threatening personnel, patrons and the environment while opening the door to costly claims or hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incidents. Fortunately, by putting strong storage and handling protocols in place, municipalities can lower these dangers, meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and local regulations, and preserve safe, welcoming pool spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Secure Storage Facilities

Secure storage lays the foundation for managing the risks tied to chlorine and muriatic acid, setting the stage for a safe pool season. Whether it is chlorine (in forms like calcium hypochlorite, sodium hypochlorite or chlorine gas) or the highly corrosive muriatic acid, these substances demand dedicated rooms away from pool activities to limit exposure. Ideally, such spaces should feature fire-resistant walls and doors to contain potential incidents like chemical fires, while ventilation systems aligned with standards from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) should work to disperse vapors. This is crucial since chlorine and acid can release toxic gases when moist or mixed. Adding non-slip, chemically resistant floors sloped to drains helps control spills, and keeping temperatures below 95°F, with low humidity, prevents container corrosion and vapor problems. For chlorine gas cylinders, which are pressurized and prone to risk, chaining them upright avoids tipping mishaps. To top it off, high-security locks, keycards or coded entry safeguards keep access limited to trained personnel, and “No Entry—Hazardous Materials” signs paired with fencing or alarms deter public entry, enhancing overall safety.

Chemical Segregation

Keeping chemical interactions at bay is a top priority. Chlorine and muriatic acid must stay apart, as their combination unleashes lethal chlorine gas vapors that endanger respiratory health. To avoid this, they are best housed in separate rooms or locked cabinets with fire-resistant barriers, ensuring no accidental mixing occurs. Clear, durable labels and color-coded containers—blue for chlorine and red for acid—streamline handling and restocking by cutting errors. Adding spill pallets or bunds are another good option because they catch leaks from damaged containers, which protects the surrounding environment. Liquid chlorine should be housed in corrosion-resistant, double-walled tanks, and acids should be put into polyethylene containers built for corrosives so they will settle. Locking these units restricts access to authorized personnel only, blocking the possibility of public tampering which could ignite hazardous incidents.

Safe Handling Practices

Building on the foundation of secure chemical storage and segregation, it is essential to develop a well-prepared team for safe chemical handling. Annual training dives into chemical traits, safe transfer techniques and emergency responses by using real-world scenarios like spill containment or gas leaks to sharpen skills. When handling chlorine or acid, personnel should wear chemical-resistant gloves, full-faced goggles and aprons. When dealing with chlorine gas, personnel must put on NIOSH-standard respirators to ensure protection at every step. Carts or dollies are a good tool to use



to ease the movement of heavy containers to avoid spills. Furthermore, only certified staff should manage chlorine gas cylinders, relying on regulators and leak detectors to monitor vapor releases. Implementing a no-lone-work policy during transfers guarantees quick aid if exposure occurs, while secure access controls keep chemicals solely with trained hands, preventing public risks.

Emergency Preparedness

Being ready for emergencies helps lessen the impact of chemical incidents, so it is recommended that supervisors and personnel tie preparedness into their daily operations. Creating a chemical-specific plan and rehearsing it quarterly builds the team's confidence and allows workers to swiftly take action when trouble strikes. Spill kits stocked with agents like sodium bicarbonate for acids need to stay accessible and get checked monthly, while eyewash stations and safety showers near storage areas should undergo scheduled flushing and inspections to ensure they are ready for vapor or liquid exposure emergencies. It is critical to have dry chemical extinguishers (not water, which can worsen reactions), marked evacuation routes and up-to-date emergency contacts to improve safety. Coordination with fire departments and HAZMAT teams, including site reviews of chemical stocks, strengthens response efforts, and secure storage curbs public-triggered emergencies from escalating.

Regulatory Compliance

Following EPA and local regulations is fundamental to maintaining safety, weaving a thread of accountability through all practices. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be created, maintained and kept accessible, along with creating digital backups to enhance reliability for quick reference. Facilitating weekly storage inspections for container integrity, vapor leaks and security, along with documented fixes, keep standards high. If any detected chlorine gas exceeds thresholds, EPA's Risk Management Program mandates risk assessments to stay compliant. Secure storage plays its part by preventing public interference, supporting these efforts and reducing claims.

Inventory Management

Careful inventory practices play a significant role in reducing risks, rounding out a comprehensive safety approach. This includes keeping minimal stocks (ordering only what is needed), rotating older batches first to avoid excess and inspecting tamper-evident seals and digital logs to track access with precision. Additionally, adding surveillance cameras or sensors, alongside locks, deter vandalism or theft that could release hazardous vapors.

Conclusion

Managing chlorine and acid safely during the heightened summer season sets the stage for municipal pools to shine. By focusing on secure storage, keeping chemicals apart, training staff well, staying ready for emergencies, adhering to EPA and local rules, and managing inventory wisely, municipalities can keep risks in check and enjoy peace of mind. Strong security—think locks, signs and fences—does more than keep the public safe; it lowers the odds of claims or HAZMAT headaches, letting communities thrive. These efforts go beyond regulations to protect the laughter and splashes that make public pools special, so take a moment now to check your storage setup—small steps today pave the way for a smooth, safe 2025. ■



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Clarifying Alabama's Stop and Identify Law

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Police officers routinely contact and interact with members of the public in a wide variety of circumstances. Accordingly, officers need effective and lawful guidelines on when and for what the legal basis is under the U.S. Supreme Court and the Code of Alabama for demanding identification from individuals. Agencies should address this matter in written policy and provide training for their officers.

"Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection."
~ Mark Twain

Terry stops, also known as stop and frisk encounters, are permitted in Alabama and when properly performed are an effective tool for law enforcement. This article will focus on the "Demand for Identification" aspect of *Terry v. Ohio*.

The 1968 U.S. Supreme Court landmark case *Terry v. Ohio* struck a balance between civil liberties and police authority to detain individuals. The court ruled that for an officer to exercise this authority he or she must first have "articulable reasonable suspicion." Reasonable suspicion requires more than a hunch, feeling or a guess. An officer must have a reasonable belief based on specific facts or circumstances that a crime is in progress, has occurred or will occur. These facts must be articulable, capable of being expressed clearly. Additionally, though not expressed in this case, these facts should also be documented in the officer's police report.

The courts have revisited *Terry v. Ohio* several times with the most recent visit by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in *Roland Edger v. Krista McCabe*. In this court ruling three key factors were specified concerning the demand for identification. The court ruled that an officer can only demand an individual's: name, address and an explanation for what they are doing.

Alabama along with other states passed their own "Stop and Identify" acts. Alabama Code § 15-5-30 provides that a law enforcement official can "demand": name, address and an explanation of an individual's actions. This, however, is true only where the officer reasonably suspects that an individual is committing, has committed or is about to commit a felony or other public offense.

An officer in these circumstances can ask for three and only three things from an individual: **1. Name 2. Address 3. Explanation for what they are doing.** Alabama does not have a law requiring individuals to possess any type of photo identification and Alabama Code § 15-5-30 does not give an officer the authority to demand one. This does not prevent an officer from asking for a driver's license; however, an individual does not have to provide one.

Here is where Alabama Code § 15-5-30 gets problematic. Alabama passed an act allowing officers to "demand" that individuals under certain conditions provide name, address and an explanation of their actions. This act, however, provides no legal penalty or imposes any obligation requiring the individual to comply. In short, the act failed to give the ability for police to effect an arrest for anyone refusing to provide identity. A lawful arrest cannot be made under Alabama Code § 15-5-30 because it does not explicitly impose an obligation to respond to an officer's demand for identification. The wording "demand" in this act has incorrectly led some officers to believe they can make an arrest based "just" on refusing to comply with Alabama Code § 15-5-30.

To make matters worse, some individuals are using social media platforms to share video recordings of interactions with law enforcement as a way to educate other individuals on how to incite police into violating their civil rights, leading, at times, to unlawful arrest. They video perceived violations of their First Amendment rights to make recordings in public and will often challenge the demand for identification. Training your officers is the key to combatting this current trend.

In Alabama, for an officer to lawfully make an arrest when he or she has the "articulable reasonable suspicion" to demand name, address and reason for activity, the municipality must have a city ordinance giving the officer arrest authority. Several municipalities in Alabama have successfully adopted these ordinances to include the cities of Dothan, Andalusia and Enterprise.

The AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division has a model Terry Stops and Demanding Identification policy that includes a sample Failure to Obey municipal ordinance that can be downloaded at www.losscontrol.org, under Reference Documents, by keyword search **Terry** or resource **PSOP-001**.

Alabama Code §13A-10-2 "Obstructing Governmental Operations" is not an applicable charge in these situations. Obstructing Governmental Operations tends to be a "go to" violation for officers during arrest situations where they are not clear on charges. A person obstructs government operations if by means of intimidation, physical force, interference, or any unlawful act, he/she intentionally obstructs, impairs, or hinders the administration of law or other governmental function or prevents a public servant from performing a governmental function.

Prior to making an arrest, officers must in every situation know exactly what law they are enforcing. If an officer is not sure what to charge someone with during an encounter that officer should slow down, decelerate the situation and not prematurely arrest for the wrong charge. Officers responding to assist must also exercise caution in these situations and ensure they gather all the facts prior to stepping in and making a premature arrest. At times, a more senior officer might feel the need to step in and take charge of the situation when in fact they arrived on the scene later and may have fewer facts. AMIC has dealt with this particular type of lawsuit more than once!

Police chiefs should ensure their officers are well informed about this issue. To enforce the law, officers must first understand the law. This requires continual training as laws change, and new laws are passed. ■



Wade Campbell Receives CSP Designation

The Loss Control Division for AMIC and MWCF is very excited to congratulate Wade Campbell for earning his Certified Safety Professional (CSP) certificate from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals! Considered the gold standard for safety, health and environmental credentials, CSP certification requires individuals to meet educational and experience standards and pass rigorous exams. This milestone represents not only a significant personal achievement but also a commitment to advancing safety practices and promoting a safer work environment for our cities and towns of Alabama. ■



Trunk-Mounted Batteries Safety Notice

AMIC recently had an auto claim that involved a police vehicle experiencing a fire that originated in the trunk. The vehicle model, a 2019 Dodge Charger, has its battery located in the trunk. The investigation revealed the presence of heavy equipment stored in the trunk, and it is surmised the fire likely stemmed from the equipment exerting pressure on the battery terminals creating a short or arc with the wire connections.

Similar incidents could occur with this or other vehicles models with trunk-mounted batteries. Drivers assigned vehicles with trunk-mounted batteries should be educated on safe equipment storage practices and conduct routine inspections to ensure compliance. ■



2025 SKIDCAR Schedule

Through an advanced, computer-controlled driver training vehicle known as the SKIDCAR System, trainees learn how to react quickly and safely to a range of hazardous driving conditions. Training is conducted throughout the state at a minimal cost. If you would like to schedule or host a SKIDCAR session in your area, please contact **Donna Wagner** at (334) 386-8125.

Decatur	August 12 - 22	Vestavia Hills	October 7 - 17
Gadsden	September 9 - 19	Oneonta	November 12 - 21



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