

## **Ames Blue Alert- Chemical Spill During Disposal**

ESH&A personnel recently responded to a request for assistance in cleaning up a spill involving lithium aluminum hydride. Lithium aluminum hydride is a gray powder that reacts with water and creates hydrogen gas. In this particular case, the slow buildup of gas inside the glass bottle caused it to burst. The force that caused the bottle to burst was small and fortunately did not result in any injuries to research personnel. Care was taken in the clean up and handling of the spilled material/broken glass and the room was released for occupancy. This event brings to light several important chemical management reminders:

- 1) Be aware of all water reactive chemicals in your inventory and their hazards. Examples of water reactive chemicals given in the ISU Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP) are alkali metals such as lithium, sodium and potassium, acid anhydrides and acid chlorides. Consult the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for specific hazard information.**
- 2) Always wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when working in the laboratory including safety eyewear, gloves and a lab coat.**
- 3) Contact ESH&A to dispose of any outdated/unnecessary water reactive chemicals in your laboratory.**
- 4) Call ESH&A for assistance with any chemical spills beyond your ability to handle.**

If you have any questions about water reactive chemicals, call (4-4743) or e-mail me at [withers@ameslab.gov](mailto:withers@ameslab.gov).

Thanks.

JHW