



## January 20 — Red-Taped Area Breach

<p><b>A customer's employee in an area that should have been red taped due to an acid leak. We were told we needed papers yet there they are just doing what they do.</b></p>	<p><b>Made a statement in the control room.</b></p>
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The controls were known, but the boundary wasn't respected. When a barricade isn't clearly established or consistently enforced, people default to what they see others doing. The presence of normal work activity sends the wrong signal, even when the hazard is active. Acid exposure doesn't announce itself, and relying on familiarity or routine in a contaminated area removes the margin for error.

**Red tape's there to say "not here,"  
When acid's present, stay clear.  
If the zone's crossed, protection fails,  
Chemicals don't follow tales.**

When chemical controls depend on interpretation instead of enforcement, exposure becomes a people problem instead of a process problem.

### Hazards

- Chemical exposure to skin, eyes, or respiratory system
- Inhalation of hazardous vapors without required protection
- Chemical burns or delayed injury
- Escalation of exposure if leak conditions worsen
- Confusion and secondary exposure to additional workers

### Stats

- Chemical exposure incidents frequently involve barricade or access control failures
- Improperly controlled exclusion zones increase exposure risk significantly
- Respiratory protection violations are a common factor in chemical-related injuries
- Many chemical injuries occur during normal work, not emergency response

### Words of Wisdom

- If the area needs red tape, it needs enforcement.
- PPE requirements don't matter if the boundary fails.

### Pause and Think

People take cues from their surroundings. When red tape is missing, unclear, or ignored, it sends a message that the hazard is either gone or manageable. That's how chemical controls break down. Acid exposure isn't about intention — it's about proximity. Clear barricades, controlled access, and consistent enforcement are what keep individual judgment from deciding who gets exposed.

- What signals tell people an area is truly off-limits?
- Who is responsible for enforcing restricted zones?
- How do we prevent mixed messages during abnormal conditions?