

To Deans, HoFAs, HOSs, Directors of Research Institutes
From Dr Melanie Taylor, Head of Safety Services
Date 7 October 2013
cc Mr W Spinks, Prof N Thakker, Dr D Barker, School Safety Advisors, Safety Representatives
Reference Safety Circular 3/2013

Plastic bottles of concentrated nitric acid

Urgent action required: please

- check all stocks of concentrated nitric acid supplied in plastic bottles by Thermo Fisher Scientific (Global Chemicals)
- quarantine 2.5 litre Winchester black plastic bottles more than 3 years old with Fisher batch/lot references 11xxxxx or lower
- DO NOT handle by the neck or stopper
- Arrange for local neutralisation and disposal. Please take particular care when handling, as the weakness is associated with the neck/stopper area.

I have been advised by our Fisher Scientific account manager Evelyn Stephenson and their chemical specialist Martin Gunson that there are concerns about the ageing of 2.5 litre black plastic bottles of nitric acid. There have been two incidents at the University, and we know of three other reports of weakened bottles. Ageing seems to cause embrittlement, with a risk that the top will shear off.

We are not expecting many such bottles to be in circulation. However, Fisher have offered free of charge replacements for any plastic concentrated nitric acid bottles that have a Batch/Lot reference starting with 11xxxxx or lower. If you do find any, please contact them quoting the actual batch reference number for your replacement.

Please advise your safety co-ordinator that you have completed the check, and please also let us know if you do any find any bottles, as appropriate.

NOTE: more recently, bottles supplied by Fisher have been labeled with a statement to discard over more than 2 years. This may have implications for your stock rotation/replacement practices.

Dr Melanie Taylor
Head of Safety Services