Formulas

The key to effective and efficient neutralization is knowing how to use the following formulas.

1. The first formula indicates how much acid is spilled in weight.

Step #1 – Determine the quantity of acid spilled, usually in gallons.
Step #2 – Determine the specific gravity of the acid usually provided in MSDS.
Step #3 – Determine the concentration of the acid spilled usually in %.
Step #4 – The weight of water is 8.34 pounds per gallon.

After the above figures are known plug them into the following formula.

Quantity of spill X specific gravity X weight of water X concentration = weight of the spill

Example

One gallon of sulfuric X 1.84 X 8.34 X 98% = 15.04 pounds of sulfuric

2. The second formula will determine the quantity of the neutralizer needed. The type of neutralizer needs to be selected based on costs and availability. Plug numbers into the following formula.

Weight of the acid spilled X number in the chart for the selected neutralizer.

Example

15.04 pounds of sulfuric X 1.06 for Soda Ash = 15.94 pounds of Soda Ash

Determination Through Chemistry

To calculate the amount of neutralization agent needed the balanced chemical reaction must be written and the equivalent weights of acid and base determined.
Example: 1,000 gallons of 38% hydrochloric acid will be neutralized with lime.

Step #1 – Write the complete balanced neutralization reaction:
$2HCl + CaO \rightarrow CaCl_2 + H_2O$
This equation shows that 2 moles of HCl are required in the reaction with one mole of calcium oxide (lime).

Determination Through Chemistry

Step #2 – Calculate the molecular weight of each compound:
HCl – H = 1, Cl = 35.5, Total = 36.5 amu
CaO – Ca = 40, O = 16, Total = 56

Step #3 – Calculate the weight of the HCl spill:
1,000 gallons X 1.20 X 8.34 X 0.38 = 3,803.04 pounds of HCl

Step #4 – Calculate the amount of neutralizer needed:
From Step #1 it was found that 2 moles of HCl are needed to react with 1 mole of CaO. From Step #2 it was found that 1 mole of HCl weighs 36.5 amu's so 2 moles weigh 73.0 amu's. The formula is**;**
weight of acid/formula weight of acid X formula weight of base = pounds of the neutralizer needed.
3,803.04/73 X 56 = 2,917.4 pounds of lime

Finer Points

The final amount is an approximation and in actual practice more neutralizing agent should be obtained. The neutralization process needs to be checked at several spots to assure pH levels are acceptable and uniform.

Neutralization Precautions

Remember, the neutralization process is exothermic and it may involve splashing of product. Safety is paramount and proper protective equipment is very important. Also, the neutralizer is hazardous in its own right and needs to be handled with care. Consider expense and availability in selecting neutralizer. Other weak bases that may be used and their molecular weights are; sodium bicarbonate ($NaHCO_3$)- 85, and magnesium hydroxide ($Mg(OH)_2$)-58.

Neutralization Chart Information

Acids

Hydrochloric Acid, HCl, MW = 36.5, density/specific gravity is 1.19, weight of a gallon is 3.77 pounds at 38% concentration. Synonyms are chlorohydric acid and muriatic acid.
Nitric Acid, HNO_3, MW = 63, density/specific gravity is 1.41, weight of a gallon is 8.23 pounds at 70% concentration. Synonyms are Aqua Fortis and Azotic Acid. (Aqua Regia is a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids).
Phosphoric Acid, H_3PO_4, MW = 98, density/specific gravity is 1.69, weight of a gallon is 11.98 pounds at 85% concentration. Synonyms are orthophosphoric acid.
Sulfuric Acid, H_2SO_4, MW = 98, density/specific gravity is 1.84, weight of a gallon is 15.04 pounds at 98% concentration. Synonyms are Oil of vitriol and "oleum" is fuming sulfuric acid.

Bases

Ammonium hydroxide, NH_4OH, MW = 35, clear solution, synonyms are ammonia solution and aqua ammonia. Strong ammonia odor evolves from liquid. High vapor pressure.
Calcium carbonate, $CaCO_3$, MW = 100, white powder, synonyms are crushed limestone and dolomite. Low heat of reaction that gives off carbon dioxide gas.
Calcium hydroxide, $Ca(OH)_2$, MW = 74, white powder, synonyms are slaked lime, hydrated lime, and calcium hydrate.
Calcium oxide, CaO, MW = 56, white powder, synonyms are quicklime, lime, and unslaked lime. Most economical, lowest cost, neutralizer. **Best choice!** Maximum pH is 12.45 at 25C.
Magnesium carbonate, $MgCO_3$, MW = 84, synonyms are magnesia alba and carbonate magnesium.
Magnesium hydroxide, $Mg(OH)_2$, MW = 58, white powder, synonyms are milk of magnesia and magnesia hydrate. Good neutralization agent. Maximum pH is 10.6 at 25C.
Potassium hydroxide, KOH, MW = 56, white flakes, synonyms are caustic potash. High heat of reaction with toxic fumes. Maximum pH is 14 at 25C.
Sodium bicarbonate, $NaHCO_3$, MW = 85, white powder, synonyms are baking soda and sodium acid carbonate. Low heat of reaction with carbon dioxide gas evolution.
Sodium Carbonate, Na_2CO_3, MW = 106, white powder, synonyms are soda ash. **Second most economical neutralization agent next to lime.** Maximum pH is approximately 11 at 25C.
Sodium hydroxide, NaOH, MW = 40, white powder, synonyms are caustic soda, soda lye, caustic, and lye. High heat of reaction with toxic fumes. Maximum pH is 14 at 25C.

Quick Access Charts

Sulfuric Acid neutralization using Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate)

Amount of Sulfuric Acid spilled	Amount of Baking Soda needed in pounds
1 gallon	25.6
2 gallons	51.2
3 gallons	76.8
4 gallons	102.4
5 gallons	128.0
10 gallons	256.0
50 gallons	1280.0
55 gallons	1408.0
100 gallons	2560.0

Hydrochloric Acid neutralization using Baking Soda

Amount of Hydrochloric Acid spilled	Amount of Baking Soda needed in pounds
1 gallon	5.5
2 gallons	11.0
3 gallons	16.5
4 gallons	22.0
5 gallons	27.5
10 gallons	55.0
50 gallons	275.0
55 gallons	302.5
100 gallons	550.0

Nitric Acid neutralization using Baking Soda

Amount of Nitric Acid spilled	Amount of Baking Soda needed in pounds
1 gallon	7.4
2 gallons	14.8
3 gallons	22.2
4 gallons	29.6
5 gallons	37.0
10 gallons	74.0
50 gallons	370.0
55 gallons	407.0
100 gallons	740.0