Chemical Categories used by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Scientists often categorize hazardous chemicals by the type of chemical or by the effects a chemical would have on people exposed to it.

**Biotoxins**  Poisons that come from plants or animals

**Blister Agents/Vesicants**  Chemicals that severely blister the eyes, respiratory tract, and skin on contact

**Blood Agents**  Poisons that affect the body by being absorbed into the blood

**Caustics (Acids)**  Chemicals that burn or corrode people’s skin, eyes, and mucus membranes (lining of the nose, mouth, throat, and lungs) on contact

**Choking/Lung/Pulmonary Agents**  Chemicals that cause severe irritation or swelling of the respiratory tract (lining of the nose, throat, and lungs)

**Incapacitating Agents**  Drugs that make people unable to think clearly or that cause an altered state of consciousness (possibly unconsciousness)

**Long-Acting Anticoagulants**  Poisons that prevent blood from clotting properly, which can lead to uncontrolled bleeding

**Metals**  Agents that consist of metallic poisons

**Nerve Agents**  Highly poisonous chemicals that work by preventing the nervous system from working properly

**Organic Solvents**  Agents that damage the tissues of living things by dissolving fats and oils

**Riot Control Agents/Tear Gas**  Highly irritating agents normally used by law enforcement for crowd control or by individuals for protection (for example, mace)

**Toxic Alcohols**  Poisonous alcohols that can damage the heart, kidneys, and nervous system

**Vomiting Agents**  Chemicals that cause nausea and vomiting