

February 25, 1999

Cathleen Colbert, Instructor  
Science Department  
Arvin High School  
P.O. Box 518  
Arvin, CA 93203

Dear Ms. Colbert:

The purpose of this correspondence is to follow up with you pursuant to a referral question I received from Ann Santer regarding the use of liquid nitrogen in a school science project.

Liquid nitrogen is a cryogenic liquid and is extremely hazardous. It is considered highly reactive and can be explosive. Liquid nitrogen requires special handling, storage, and protective equipment. It can cause frostbite, severe freeze injuries to skin and eyes, and objects cooled by liquid nitrogen can stick to the skin and tear flesh. Liquid nitrogen also produces large amounts of gas that is extremely cold and can damage eye tissues. The gas itself is invisible, therefore, hazardous conditions may exist without notice. The cloudy vapor that exists upon pouring is condensed moisture and not gas.

Due to the hazards listed above, it is SISC's position that liquid nitrogen should not be used in schools nor should minors use the product under any circumstances. The hazards simply outweigh any educational value.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at 636-4608.

Sincerely,

Catherine Wilson Jones, CSP  
Coordinator, Safety and Loss Control

CWJ:sh