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B-2 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL / WMD INCIDENTS

PURPOSE

To establish a Central Zone policy for the safe handling and mitigation of hazardous materials / weapons of mass destruction (WMD) incidents.

POLICY**Responsibility**

The Fire Department is often first to arrive at a hazardous materials incident. On roadways the management of releases is usually the responsibility of the law enforcement agency with traffic investigation responsibility.

For those incidents that are the responsibility of the law enforcement agency unified command should be established.

Operational Guideline

Hazardous materials responses have a broad potential to be any type of solid, liquid, radioactive material, or gas substance, including weapons of mass destruction. When released, any hazardous material can create harm to people, the environment and property. It is impractical to develop a set of operational guidelines that accurately cover all potential incident scenarios, therefore, below is a list of basic fundamental operational guidelines that may be expanded upon depending on the complexity of the incident.

- All hazardous materials incident responders shall utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) format and terminology in the management of the incident. Hazardous material response checklists and the current Field Operations Guide (FOG) are resources to assist the IC in managing the incident.
- The Incident Commander shall designate an incident Safety Officer (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 (q) (3) vii)).
- The Incident Commander shall assign RIC or "back-up" personnel to be standing by with equipment ready to provide assistance or rescue (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 (q) (3) vi)).
- All members shall wear the appropriate protective clothing. A minimum of FULL PERSONAL STRUCTURAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) must be worn inside the operational perimeter or "Hot Zone". Special protective clothing may be necessary depending upon the nature of the materials involved.
- Personnel responding to and operating at an incident shall only perform duties within their level of hazardous materials training (operational or technician level) and "mission specific" competencies that have been approved by their AHJ.
- If mitigation measures are unclear it is recommended that HIRT be contacted as well as other technical experts for advice. If needed, the county Department of Environmental Health (DEH) HAZMAT team should also be requested to respond.
- Remember when the HIRT team arrives they do not assume command or take control of the incident; they are a resource to be used by the incident commander to help manage the incident.

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- Establishing safety zones is very important in the safe management of hazardous materials incidents. If personnel are sent into exclusionary zones, hazard zones, or "hot zones" decontamination procedures must be instituted and medical personnel should be present. Always expose as few people as possible.

Unified Command Partners and/or Assisting Agencies

Law Enforcement - Local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies may respond to Hazardous Materials incidents. Depending on incident factors, law enforcement may be a partner in Unified Command or may participate as an assisting agency. Some functional responsibilities that may be handled by law enforcement are:

- Isolate the incident area
- Manage crowd control
- Manage traffic control
- Manage public protective action
- Provide scene management for on-highway incidents
- Manage criminal investigations
- Evidence collection

Environmental Health Agencies - In most cases the local (San Diego City HIRT) or State environmental health agency (DEH-HIRT) will be at the scene as a partner in Unified Command. Some functional responsibilities that may be handled by environmental health agencies are:

- Determine the identity and nature of the Hazardous Materials.
- Establish the criteria for clean-up and disposal of the Hazardous Materials.
- Declare the site safe for re-entry by the public.
- Provide the medical history of exposed individuals.
- Monitor the environment.
- Supervise the cleanup of the site.
- Enforce various laws and acts.
- Determine legal responsibility.
- Provide technical advice.
- Approve funding for the cleanup.

Civil Support Team (CST) / US ARMY TECHNICAL ESCORT UNIT (TEU) – The California National Guard (CNG) Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (CST) and US Army Technical Escort Unit (TEU) are available to support local incident commanders and local emergency first responders twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven days per week for any Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terrorist or Military HAZMAT/ordinance events. In most cases the CST or TEU would participate as an assisting agency.

When requesting CST or TEU consider possible response delay due to team activation and clearance protocols.

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PROCEDURE

Initial Response

The initial response to reported or suspected hazardous materials releases should be a full first alarm assignment. "Single engine" responses should not occur unless it has been confirmed that the incident is minor and has no potential of escalation or is a hazmat investigation.

The first company that arrives at the scene of a Hazardous Materials release shall initiate immediate actions to isolate the area (Site Access). Initial isolation distances should be in accordance with the current DOT Emergency Response Guidebook. In addition, the Company Officer shall establish and assume Incident Command and order additional resources.

Upon arrival first responders shall institute ICS, including identifying a Safety Officer. Priorities when mitigating a HAZMAT/WMD should include:

- **LIFE SAFETY**
- INCIDENT STABILIZATION
- PROPERTY CONSERVATION
- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
- CONSIDER TERRORIST ACTIVITIES
- DETERMINE SITE/INCIDENT FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

To accomplish these priorities companies should isolate, identify, contain and control products if they can safely do so. It is recommended that the Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT) be contacted as well as other technical experts for advice. The county Department of Environmental Health (DEH) HazMat team should also be requested to respond.

Initial Incident Tasks:

- Scene size-up
- From a safe location assess and analyze the incident
- Secure the scene
- S.I.N. - Safety, Isolation, and Notification
- Detect the presence of a hazardous materials/WMD
- Identify the hazardous materials/WMD present
- HIRT will require at least three sources of product identification before they will confirm compound
- Collect information
- Reference DOT Emergency Response Guidebook
- Interview site or facility staff with knowledge of processes, products and personnel

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- Determine level of personal protection equipment
- Develop an action plan
- Implement an action plan consistent with the emergency response guidebook
- Protect against potential hazards (Health, Fire and/or Explosion)
- Assess public safety (evacuation, protect in place, establish Hot/Warm and Cold Zones)
- Determine and initiate proper emergency response and resources
- Communicate pertinent information to ECC and responding units

Establishing safety zones is very important in the safe management of hazardous materials incidents. If personnel are sent into exclusionary zones, hazard zones or "hot zones" decontamination procedures must be instituted and medical personnel shall be on scene. Always try to expose as few people as possible.

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