
	STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE				
	OPERATIONS				
	HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS – RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS INVOLVING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION				
	Effective: 01/Aug/99	Revised: 28/Dec/2020	S.O.G. #: O-324b	Page: 1 of 6	

1.0 Objective

- 1.1 The purpose of this guideline is to establish procedures for responding to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction including chemical, biological, or explosive devices.

2.0 Responsibility



- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all Department personnel to understand the procedures documented in this Standard Operating Guideline.

3.0 Background



- 3.1 Incidents involving the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have the potential for injuring or killing large numbers of people. Incidents of this type should be managed as hazardous materials incidents with mass casualty implications. Additionally, an incident involving WMD is a criminal situation that requires the close cooperation of law enforcement agencies.
- 3.2 In situations where WMD agents are suspected, responders *must utilize* proper protective clothing. When rescue of victims in enclosed spaces (buildings, parking garages, etc.) is necessary, responders shall be attired in Level "B" fully encapsulated PPE, inner glove, outer glove, and SCBA. Personnel assigned to perform the rescue should be members of the hazardous materials team if at all possible.
- 3.2.1 Emergency responders who are protected by structural firefighting clothing and SCBA can handle contaminated victims *outside* enclosed areas but Level "B" ensemble should be used when practical. Although liquid residue is unlikely, responders should avoid all contact with liquid product regardless of the protection level.
- 3.3 In WMD incidents with contaminated mass casualties, responders can be most effective by initiating mass casualty decontamination procedures for the victims.
- 3.4 In all situations, the greatest challenges will be minimizing the potential for panic, identifying the suspect substance, and providing the appropriate treatment.
- 3.5 The use of, or threat to use, a WMD is a federal crime. As a result, the Incident Commander should immediately request a Police Supervisor to the scene who can, in turn, make the appropriate contacts to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- 3.6 If the Police Department feels that the incident is a credible threat, the proper staging of personnel and equipment will be important to the incident. The Fire Department Incident Commander will meet with the Police Supervisor for an on-scene information briefing and situation update. From this point, the Fire Department Incident Commander can deploy personnel and equipment in the most effective and efficient way.

4.0 Guideline



- 4.1 Responsibilities for a response to a WMD event will include, but will not be limited to, the following:
- 4.1.1 First arriving unit: Sizing up the situation based on the following signs and symptoms exhibited by the victims:
- 4.1.1.1 Tearing eyes
 - 4.1.1.2 Myosis (pupil contraction)
 - 4.1.1.3 Nausea and vomiting

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- 4.1.1.4 Muscular convulsions
- 4.1.1.5 **Note:** The same or similar symptoms will be visible in multiple victims.
- 4.1.2 Noting physical signs at the incident scene, including:
 - 4.1.2.1 Unusual odors (sharp, musty, fruity, garlic, newly mowed grass or hay, etc.)
 - 4.1.2.2 Report of a small explosion or gaseous cloud release.
- 4.1.3 Obtaining accounts of onlookers, bystanders, and victims.
- 4.2 Duties of the first arriving unit(s) will include, but will not be limited to, the following:
 - 4.2.1 Don SCBA and PPE
 - 4.2.1.1 For all responders working in the Warm Zone, away from the Hot Zone, the greatest health risk is respiratory. Donning SCBA offers maximum protection, and structural firefighting gear will protect the skin. Personnel should don Level "B" suits whenever possible.
 - 4.2.2 Seal off the area and deny exit or entry. This can be accomplished by designating the Hot, Warm, and Cold Zones as part of the normal hazardous materials process. Utilize fire line tape, rope, or other suitable material to cordon off the area to ensure that potentially contaminated victims do not vacate the area and are directed to the decontamination corridor. This will also assist in keeping bystanders who are not contaminated from entering the affected area.
 - 4.2.3 Establish Command. The Command Post should be:
 - 4.2.3.1 Positioned uphill and upwind from the incident Hot Zone
 - 4.2.3.2 Easily identified by all personnel, especially non-fire agencies. Utilization of the Command "Green Light" will facilitate this.
 - 4.2.4 Assemble the required resources. If not already dispatched, request the following resources:
 - 4.2.4.1 Highland Park Fire Department Hazardous Materials Response Team. These personnel can be augmented by the MABAS Division III Hazardous Materials Team, if necessary.
 - 4.2.4.2 Consider the need for EMS and Fire MABAS Box Alarms based on the hazards determined.
 - 4.2.4.3 Activation of the hospital Mass Casualty or Multi-Patient Plans (if necessary).
 - 4.2.4.4 Police Supervisor and support personnel.
 - 4.2.4.5 Public Works. Personnel can provide assistance by providing barricades, sewer information (both sanitary and storm), water supply information, and other support assistance.
 - 4.2.4.6 Consider the use of buses for victim transport.
 - 4.2.5 Establish mass casualty decon (for chemical exposure)
 - 4.2.5.1 One of the most important functions first responders can perform is to establish a decontamination corridor for victims to proceed through prior to being triaged for medical treatment and transport, if necessary. The decon corridor shall be managed under the direction of a Decon Officer assigned by the Incident Commander.
 - 4.2.5.2 The mass casualty decon corridor can be established through the creation of a shower system utilizing the aerial ladder and 2 1/2" discharge ports with nozzles. The objective is to provide a corridor for the victims to walk through while being showered with large quantities of water.
- 4.3 The primary responsibilities of the Incident Commander will include, but will not be limited to:

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- 4.3.1 All applicable procedures as established in Standard Operating Guideline O-303. Be prepared to greatly expand Command operations and operate under a Unified Incident Management System.
- 4.3.1 Incident strategy and management.
- 4.3.2 Personnel accountability as established in Standard Operating Guideline O-316.
- 4.3.3 Scene safety as established in Standard Operating Guideline O-322.
- 4.3.4 If the incident involves use of suspected WMD, the FBI has jurisdiction as the lead Federal agency. Federal resources can be accessed through the FBI's representatives.
- 4.3.5 Documentation will be important during a WMD event. If staffing will allow, appoint a person to document on-scene operations and Command decisions/actions. Include times as accurately as possible.
- 4.4 The primary responsibility of the Hazardous Materials Branch or Group will include, but will not be limited to:
 - 4.4.1 Implementation of Standard Operating Guideline O-324, Hazardous Materials Operations.
 - 4.4.2 Entry into the Hot Zone for recon, rescue, detection, and monitoring.
 - 4.4.2.1 All entries shall be made in a minimum of Level "B" ensembles until the following information is known:
 - 4.4.2.1.1 Identification of type of agent
 - 4.4.2.1.2 Toxicity/concentration (IDLH levels)
 - 4.4.2.1.3 Atmospheric oxygen available
 - 4.4.2.1.4 Presence of flammable gas
 - 4.4.3 Units can begin to remove their suits upon a decision from the IC, based on information from the Hazardous Materials Sector Officer.
 - 4.4.4 A separate emergency decontamination corridor may be set up under the direction of the Haz-Mat Officer. This corridor is for use by *emergency personnel only*.
 - 4.4.5 Report all applicable information to the Incident Commander.
- 4.5 The primary responsibility of the Decon Branch or Group will include, but will not be limited to:
 - 4.5.1 Coordinate the implementation of the mass casualty decon corridor.
 - 4.5.1.1 Actual configuration of the corridor is dependent upon the incident site, available space, and the water supply.
 - 4.5.1.2 Ensure an adequate water supply for the decon is met.
 - 4.5.1.3 The decon corridor will require a large area. It should be located in the warm zone as close as possible to the victims' original location to avoid having them travel too far to enter the corridor.
 - 4.5.1.4 Communicate with the Incident Commander concerning the number of victims and the need for assistance with non-ambulatory victims.
- 4.6 The primary responsibility of the EMS Branch or Group will include, but will not be limited to:
 - 4.6.1 Identify and establish triage, treatment, and transportation areas.
 - 4.6.1.1 These areas should be located so those decontaminated victims can be triaged, treated and, if necessary, transported as efficiently as possible.

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- 4.6.2 Assess the need for additional EMS units and request the IC to activate them through the Dispatch Center or through MABAS Division III.
- 4.6.3 Initiate triage, provide treatment for decontaminated victims, and transport to medical facilities.
- 4.6.4 Initiate contact with Highland Park Hospital and advise them of the incident and the potential for a large number of chemically poisoned or biologically contaminated victims. Advise them on the approximate number of victims and implement the Multi-Patient Incident procedures or Mass Casualty Plan, if needed.

5.0 Scene Management for Chemical Incidents



- 5.1 The management of patients is a critical component for successful mitigation of a chemical incident. The following procedures will assist in the successful handling of a chemical incident:
 - 5.1.1 Establish triage and treatment areas immediately outside the mass casualty decon corridor.
 - 5.1.2 Ensure that victims **do not** have to pass through the warm or hot zones to proceed to the transportation area.
 - 5.1.3 Establish control areas as part of the Triage Sector. Victims who do not need immediate transport can be sent to these areas, while those requiring immediate transport can be moved to the transportation area.
 - 5.1.4 Identify building lobbies or other large areas that can be utilized to temporarily house victims in cold weather (identified as temperatures below 55 degrees F.).

6.0 Scene Management for Biological Incidents

- 6.1 See Standard Operating Guideline O-324a, Hazardous Materials Operations, and Response to a Bio-Chem Threat.

7.0 Scene Management for Incidents Involving Explosive Devices

- 7.1 Companies responding to incidents involving explosive devices must assess the scene carefully. Particular attention must be paid to the fact that small explosive yield (magnitude) devices can be used as dissemination devices for WMD materials. Observing the appearance and signs/symptoms of victims may indicate whether a chemical material has been released.
- 7.2 Pre-Explosion Considerations
 - 7.2.1 The size of the suspected device, which will aid in determining evacuation distances. These judgments and subsequent evacuation efforts should be coordinated with the Police Department.
 - 7.2.2 A device that has not yet detonated is a **Police Department responsibility**. However, if the potential exists that the device may detonate within an occupied area, the Fire Department will support the Police Department in any and all functions needed.
 - 7.2.3 The use of portable radio traffic should be extremely limited. The use of runners with scene information is preferable.
- 7.3 Post Explosion Considerations
 - 7.3.1 If the incident is believed to be the result of a terrorist action, consideration should be given to the potential for secondary devices. Unusual packages and objects (unidentified boxes, packages, suitcases, etc.) located in unusual places (at or near the front door, standpipe connection, hydrant, etc.) should be viewed with suspicion and avoided until confirmed as not dangerous.
 - 7.3.2 Assessing the location of the majority of damage will indicate where the explosive device was located and where the most severely injured victims may be located.

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- 7.3.3 Establishing a large area for triage, treatment, and transport is required to provide adequate working space for responding EMS personnel. Consider additional space for special response teams such as a USAR team, FBI, and other local and federal teams.
- 7.3.4 Activation of TRT if victims are trapped, pinned, etc., and activates TRT through the dispatch center or MABAS Division III.

8.0 Establishing a Mass Casualty Decon Corridor (MCD)

- 8.1 Position Engine Companies approximately 20 to 25 feet apart, aligned in parallel, with the pump panels facing away from each other. The side discharges shall be aligned directly across from each other.
- 8.2 Mount 2 1/2" handline nozzles on both side discharges.
- 8.3 Set the nozzles to approximately 30 to 40 degrees.
- 8.4 Pump engine at a low enough pressure to provide adequate flow into the corridor without harming the victims as they traverse the corridor.
- 8.5 Position a ladder truck aerial master stream to fill the end of the corridor with a large volume spray (as specified above for the engines).
- 8.6 Initial decon operations should begin with 1 or 2 engines and 1 ladder truck. Additional apparatus may be required based on the size and scope of the incident. (See Figure 1 on page 6)
- 8.7 Do not utilize Squad #33 as part of the Mass Decon system. Personnel will need access to the hazardous materials equipment carried on the vehicle. Squad #33 should be positioned at the best tactical location to the incident site.

9.0 Reference

- 9.1 Highland Park Fire Department

Approved:  Fire Chief



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