

Hazardous Material Response

406.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Hazardous materials present a potential harm to employees as a result of their exposure. To comply with Wisconsin law, the following represents the policy of this agency.

406.1.1 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DEFINED

Hazardous substance - Any substance or combination of substances including any waste of a solid, semisolid, liquid or gaseous form which may cause or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible or incapacitating reversible illness or which may pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment because of its quantity, concentration or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics. This term includes, but is not limited to, substances which are toxic, corrosive, flammable, irritants, strong sensitizers or explosives (Wis. Stat. § 299.01(6)).

406.2 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE

Employees may encounter situations involving suspected hazardous materials, such as at the scene of a traffic crash, chemical spill or fire. When employees come into contact with a suspected hazardous material, they should take certain steps to protect themselves and other persons.

The fire department is the agency trained and equipped to properly respond and mitigate most hazardous materials and biohazards.

Responders should not perform tasks or use equipment without proper training.

A responder entering the area may require decontamination before he/she is allowed to depart the scene and should be evaluated by appropriate technicians and medical professionals for signs of exposure.

The following steps should be considered at any scene involving suspected hazardous materials:

- (a) Make the initial assessment of a potential hazardous material from a safe distance.
- (b) Remain upwind, uphill and at a safe distance, maintaining awareness of weather and environmental conditions, until the material is identified and a process for handling has been determined.
- (c) Wear personal protective gear, being cognizant that some hazardous material may quickly volatilize into a form which is readily inhaled.
- (d) Attempt to identify the type of hazardous material from a safe distance using optical aids (binoculars/spotting scopes) if they are available. Identification can be determined by:
 1. Placards and use of the Emergency Response Guidebook.
 2. Driver's statements or shipping documents from the person transporting the material.

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3. Information obtained from any involved person with knowledge regarding the hazardous material.
- (e) Obtain information from any involved party who has knowledge regarding the hazardous material. Information should include:
 1. The identity of the material.
 2. How to secure and contain the material.
 3. Any other information to protect the safety of those present, the community and the environment.
- (f) Notify the appropriate fire department. Provide weather conditions, wind direction, a suggested safe approach route and any other information pertinent to responder safety.
- (g) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely and without contamination.
- (h) Begin evacuation of the immediate and surrounding areas, dependent on the material. Voluntary evacuation should be considered. Depending on the material, mandatory evacuation may be necessary.
- (i) Make reasonable efforts to secure the scene to prevent access from unauthorized personnel.
- (j) Establish a decontamination area when needed.
- (k) Contact the 24-hour Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center at 800-943-0003 to request assistance.
- (l) If available, activate an emergency alert system to the affected area.

406.3 REPORTING EXPOSURE

Agency personnel who believe they have been exposed to a hazardous material shall immediately report the exposure to a supervisor. Each exposure shall be documented by the employee in the appropriate report. Should the affected employee be unable to document the exposure for any reason, it shall be the responsibility of the notified supervisor to complete the appropriate report.

Injury or illness caused or believed to be caused from exposure to hazardous materials shall be reported the same as any other on-duty injury or illness, in addition to a crime report or incident report.

406.3.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When a supervisor has been informed that an employee has been exposed to a hazardous material, he/she shall ensure appropriate action is taken to treat the exposure.

406.4 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRAINING

Employees should receive periodic training regarding hazardous material awareness and how to handle a hazardous material incident.