



PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidance on the establishment and operation of mass decontamination in response to incidents where the number of people potentially exposed to a hazardous material exceeds the capability of routine decontamination procedures.

POLICY

Emergency mass decontamination will be utilized in potentially life threatening situations to rapidly remove contaminants from a group of individuals. This will be accomplished with four primary objectives:

1. Responders don proper protective equipment (Level D – Structural Firefighting PPC with SCBA)
2. Victims will be triaged for need of immediate decontamination
3. Victims proceed through mass decontamination; this will be most effective if victims disrobe to their level of comfort. However, this should not delay decontamination in the event of personal objection.
4. Victims provided an area of safety/refuge

Victim Containment

Affected victims shall be confined to the established “Hot Zone” until mass decontamination is provided. Safe/refuge areas shall be established for victims.

Victim Triage

Personnel shall be assigned to triage victims for need of decontamination.

- Victims that were exposed to, or are symptomatic for, the contaminant shall be decontaminated through mass decontamination.
- Victims that are not suspected to have been exposed, and are asymptomatic, should be directed to a refuge area for observation of symptom development.

Mass Decontamination Site Selection

The site should be located in an accessible area in the established “Warm Zone”. Points of consideration for the site should include:

- Water availability
- Ability to contain run-off
- Site should be uphill and upwind of the established “Hot Zone”

Decontamination Corridor

The decontamination corridor should progress from the established “Hot Zone” into the mass decontamination site and toward the established refuge area. This corridor shall be established by the Decontamination Group and marked in a manner that readily distinguishes it.

Approved



The corridor shall begin with an area (shielded from general public view when possible) for disrobing of victims. This area will progress to the active mass decontamination area and discharge to the proper refuge area. Depending on the mass decontamination method utilized, fire apparatus may be utilized to create this corridor.

Mass Decontamination Methods

The primary method for mass decontamination will involve removal of contaminated clothing followed by 30 to 180 seconds of water showering. Water showering may be achieved using one of three options:

- Two hand lines, each staffed with two firefighters, flowing water at approximately 50 psi through a wide fog pattern.
- Two engines placed parallel to each other approximately 25' apart. Utilizing a discharge facing the opposite engine, both flowing water at approximately 50 psi through a wide fog pattern.
- Same as method 2 with the addition of an elevated water stream through an aerial waterway at approximately 50 psi and on a wide fog pattern.
- Use of a decontamination shelter, as feasible.

The secondary method for mass decontamination will involve removal of contaminated clothing followed by absorbing contaminants by blotting victims with a cloth, towel, or similar tool. This method is preferred for liquid contaminants and when weather poses the risk of hypothermia being a greater hazard to victims.

Post Decontamination

Victims that are asymptomatic, and show no further signs of contamination, should be sent to the established refuge area.

Victims that are symptomatic should be provided secondary decontamination.

Secondary decontamination may be performed utilizing the alternate decontamination method, or repeating the primary method if time requires. Symptomatic victims will be sent to medical triage for transport to a medical facility.

Victim Release

Victims may be released once the scene and victims are determined to be safe by the incident commander. This decision shall follow their consultation with applicable officers and specialists.

Approved

Fire Chief

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