

INDICATORS OF A POSSIBLE RADIOLOGICAL INCIDENT

Radiation Symbols	Containers may display a “propeller” radiation symbol.
Unusual metal debris	Unexplained bomb/munitions-like material.
Heat-emitting material	Material that is hot or seems to emit heat without any sign of an external heat source.
Glowing material	Strongly radioactive material may emit or cause radioluminescence.
Sick people/animals	In very improbable scenarios there may be unusual numbers of sick or dying people or animals. Casualties may occur hours to days or weeks after an incident has occurred. The time required before symptoms are observed is dependent on the radioactive material used, and the dose received. Possible symptoms include skin reddening or vomiting.

PERSONAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

When approaching a scene that may involve CB agents or radioactive materials, the most critical consideration is the safety of oneself and other responders. Protective clothing and respiratory protection of appropriate level of safety must be used. In incidents where it is suspected that CBRN materials have been used as weapons, NIOSH-certified respirators with CBRN protection are highly recommended. Be aware that the presence and identification of CB agents or radioactive materials may not be verifiable, especially in the case of biological or radiological agents. The following actions/measures to be considered are applicable to either a chemical, biological or radiological incident. The guidance is general in nature, not all encompassing, and its applicability should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Approach and response strategies. Protect yourself and use a safe approach (minimize any exposure time, maximize the distance between you and the item that is likely to harm you, use cover as protection and wear appropriate personal protective equipment and respiratory protection). Identify and estimate the hazard by using indicators as provided above. Isolate the area and secure the scene; potentially contaminated people should be isolated and decontaminated as soon as possible. To the extent possible, take measures to limit the spread of contamination. In the event of a chemical incident, the fading of chemical odors is not necessarily an indication of reduced vapor concentrations. Some chemicals deaden the senses giving the false perception that the chemical is no longer present.

If there is any indication that an area may be contaminated with radioactive materials, including the site of any non-accidental explosion, responder personnel should be equipped with radiation detection equipment that would alert them if they are entering a radiologically

compromised environment, and should have received adequate training in its use. This equipment should be designed in such a way that it can also alert the responders when an unacceptable ambient dose rate or ambient dose has been reached.

Initial actions to consider in a potential CBRN/Hazmat Terrorism Event:

- Avoid using cell phones, radios, etc. within 100 meters (300 feet) of a suspect device.
- NOTIFY your local police by calling 911.
- Set up Incident command upwind and uphill of the area.
- Do NOT touch or move suspicious packages/containers.
- Be cautious regarding potential presence of secondary devices (e.g. Improvised Explosive Devices, IEDs).
- Avoid contamination.
- Limit access to only those responsible for rescue of victims or assessment of unknown materials or devices.
- Evacuate and isolate individuals potentially exposed to dangerous goods/hazardous materials.
- Isolate contaminated areas and secure the scene for analysis of material.

Decontamination measures. Emergency responders should follow standard decontamination procedures (flush-strip-flush). Mass casualty decontamination should begin as soon as possible by stripping (all clothing) and flushing (soap and water). If biological agents are involved or suspected, careful washing and use of a brush are more effective. If chemical agents are suspected, the most important and effective decontamination will be that done within the first one or two minutes. If possible, further decontamination should be performed using a 0.5% hypochlorite solution (1 part household bleach mixed with 9 parts water). If biological agents are suspected, a contact time of 10 to 15 minutes should be allowed before rinsing. The solution can be used on soft tissue wounds, but must not be used in eyes or open wounds of the abdomen, chest, head, or spine. For further information contact the agencies listed in this guidebook.

For persons contaminated with radioactive material, remove them to a low radiation area if necessary. Remove their clothing and place it in a clearly marked sealed receptacle, such as a plastic bag, for later testing. Use decontamination methods described above, but avoid breaking the skin, e.g., from shaving, or overly vigorous brushing. External radiological contamination on intact skin surface rarely causes a high enough dose to be a hazard to either the contaminated person or the first responders. For this reason, except in very unusual circumstances, an injured person who is also radiologically contaminated should be medically stabilized, taking care to minimize the spread of the contamination to the extent possible, before decontamination measures are initiated.

NOTE: The above information was developed in part by the Department of National Defence (Canada), the U.S. Department of the Army, Aberdeen Proving Ground and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).