

	<b>Terryville Fire Department Chiefs Policies</b>	
	<u>Subject</u> <b>Response to HAZMAT Incidents</b>	BP# 3-14
	<u>Authority</u> <b>Chief of Department</b>	Initiated 3/1/2024  Revised

### A. PURPOSE

- This plan provides a basic strategic plan for hazardous materials situations. All Terryville Fire Department Best Practices, unless superseded by a specific part of this plan, remain in effect for Hazardous Materials incidents.

### B. GENERAL GUIDELINES / CONSIDERATIONS

1. All members shall comply with all safety-related best practices.
2. Reflective safety vests should only be worn by support personnel (traffic, EMS, etc.) and not by personnel conducting activities directly related to the Hazardous Materials Incident.
3. Hazardous Materials present particular problems for fire protection, health, safety, and environmental protection. Some of these problems include fire extinguishment, ignition prevention, and disposal of spills. All three of these may be involved in the same incident.

### C. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- FIRST ARRIVING UNIT: The first arriving officer will establish Command and begin a size-up. The first unit must consciously avoid committing itself to a dangerous situation. When approaching, slow down or stop to assess any visible activity taking place. Evaluate effects of wind, topography, and location of the situation. Command will advise ALL OTHER UNITS to stage until instructed to take specific action. Units must be staged in a safe location, taking into account wind, spill flow, explosion potential, and similar factors in any situation.
- INCIDENT COMMAND: For all hazardous materials incidents, other than those that are handled on a routine basis, command shall be established or transferred to an officer with the following qualifications:

Minimum of 24 hours of training equal to the first responder operations level and in addition have competency in the following areas (HAZ-MAT IC):

- Know and be able to implement the Fire Department Incident Command System.
- Know how to implement the Response to HAZMAT Incidents plan.
  
- Know and understand the hazards, risks, and limitations associated with firefighters working in protective clothing.
- Know how to request the aid of the Brookhaven Town Fire Marshal's Hazardous Materials Response Team.

#### **D. SIZE-UP**

Command must make a careful size-up before deciding on a commitment. It may be necessary to take immediate action to make a rescue or evacuate an area, but this should be done with an awareness of the risk to Fire Department personnel and taking advantage of available protective equipment. The objective of the size-up is to identify the nature and severity of the immediate problem and gather sufficient information to formulate a valid action plan. A hazardous materials incident requires a more cautious and deliberate size-up than most fire situations.

Avoid premature commitment of companies and personnel to potentially hazardous locations. Proceed with caution in evaluating risks before formulating a plan and keep uncommitted companies at a safe distance.

Identify a hazardous area based on potential danger, taking into account materials involved, time of day, wind and weather conditions, location of the incident, and degree of risk to unprotected personnel. Take immediate action to evacuate and/or rescue persons in critical danger, if possible, providing for safety of rescuers.

The major problem in most cases is to identify the type of materials involved in a situation, and the hazards presented, before formulating a plan of action. Look for labels, markers, and shipping papers, refer to pre-fire plans, and ask personnel at the scene (plant management, responsible party, truck drivers, fire department specialist). Utilize reference materials carried on apparatus (I.e. ERG guidebook) and have dispatcher contact other sources for assistance in sizing up the problem (Chemtrec, other agencies, fire department specialists, manufacturers of materials, etc.).

#### **E. ACTION PLAN**

Based on the initial size-up and any information available, Command will have to formulate an action plan to deal with the situation. Most hazardous materials are intended to be maintained in a safe condition for handling and use through confinement in a container or protective system. The emergency is usually related to the material escaping from the protective container or system and creating a hazard on the exterior. The strategic plan must include a method to get the hazardous material back into a safe container, dispose of it, neutralize it, or allow it to dissipate safely.

The specific action plan must identify the method of hazard control and identify the resources available and/or required to accomplish this goal. It may be necessary to select one method over another due to the unavailability of a particular resource or to adopt a "holding action" wait for the necessary equipment or supplies.

As a general policy, the Brookhaven Town Fire Marshal's Hazardous Materials Response Team will be called to any situation involving direct contact with hazardous materials.

The Action Plan Must Provide For:

1. Safety of citizens
2. Safety of Firefighters
3. Evacuation of endangered area, if necessary
4. Control of situation
5. Stabilization of hazardous materials, and/or
6. Disposal or removal of hazardous material.

Avoid committing personnel and equipment prematurely or "experimenting" with techniques and tactics. Many times, it is necessary to evacuate and wait for special equipment or expert help.

#### **F. CONTROL OF HAZARDOUS AREA**

A hazardous material incident has two zones associated with the scene, similar to a fire. There are the HAZARD ZONE OR HOT ZONE and the WARM ZONE OR EVACUATION ZONE.

#### **G. HAZARD ZONE OR HOT ZONE**

The Hazard Zone is the area in which personnel are potentially in immediate danger from hazardous conditions. This is established by Command and controlled by the Fire Department. Access to this area will be rigidly controlled and only personnel with proper protective equipment and an assigned activity will enter. All personnel and equipment will remain in designated staging areas until assigned. Personnel will be assigned to monitor the entry and exit of all personnel from the Hazard Zone. The Hazard Zone shall be geographically described to all responding units, if possible. (A Sector may be established to control access to the Hazard Zone and maintain an awareness of which personnel are working in the area.)

#### **H. EVACUTION ZONE OR WARM ZONE**

The Evacuation Zone is the larger area surrounding the Hazard Zone in which a lesser degree of risk to personnel exists. All civilians would be removed from this area. The limits of this zone will be enforced by the Police Department based on distances and directions established in consultation with Command. The area to be evacuated depends on the nature and amount of the material and type of risk it presents to unprotected personnel (toxic, explosive, etc.).

In some cases, it is necessary to completely evacuate a radius around a site for a

certain distance (i.e. potential explosion).

In other cases, it may be advisable to evacuate a path downwind where toxic or flammable vapors may be carried (and control ignition sources in case of flammable vapors).

**NOTE:** When toxic or irritant vapors are being carried downwind, it may be more effective to keep everyone indoors with windows and doors closed to prevent contact with the material instead of evacuating the area. In these cases, companies would be assigned to patrol the area assisting citizens in shutting down ventilation systems and evacuating persons with susceptibility to respiratory problems. In all cases, the responsibility for the safety of all potentially endangered citizens rests with Command.

#### **I. Use of Non-Fire Department Personnel**

In some cases, it may be advantageous to use non-Fire Department personnel to evaluate hazards and perform certain functions for which they would have particular experience or ability.

#### **J. DISPOSAL**

It is the responsibility of the individual, business, or property owner for cleanup and disposal. The Brookhaven Town Fire Marshal and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation should be notified for significant spills or any spill with possible contamination. Small spills must be absorbed or emulsified.

**\*Incidents which involve Flammable liquid incidents are covered in BP#3-11 Flammable Liquid Incidents.**