

Waltham Police Department

CHAPTER 89

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS

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POLICY:

Hazardous materials are now used in numerous businesses and industries and transported through the City of Waltham on a daily basis by both truck and train. The possibility of an accident involving one of the vehicles or businesses has become a reality. The extent of damage from an accident involving a hazardous material depends largely on the response of emergency personnel and their ability to correctly identify and deal with such an incident.

It is the policy of the Waltham Police Department to provide for the initial response and investigation of incidents involving hazardous materials, including both truck and rail accidents as well as incidents on industrial or business sites while minimizing danger to personnel.

1. PROCEDURE:

- a. **A CAUTIOUS APPROACH** should be made in responding to and investigating such incidents. Officers approaching any railcar, truck or other situation/accident that may involve hazardous materials should take the following actions. Officers should remember- if you are hurt, you only add to the problem.
- b. Survey a suspected hazardous materials incident from a safe distance. Approach the incident from upwind. Stay clear of all spills, vapors, fumes and smoke. If you can smell the vapors or feel the gas or any irritation, you're too close. Some hazardous materials can cause irreversible body injuries immediately upon initial contact or inhalation. Any evidence of the potential of a hazardous material should be sufficient to alarm officers to seal off the area/street until **positive identification can be made by the Waltham Fire Department, who shall be called immediately.**
- c. **DENY ENTRANCE** to a suspected HAZMAT scene. Try to create a safe perimeter and keep people out of the area.
- d. To assist in identification of hazardous materials officers should look for the following:

1. **PLACARDS:** Placards are required to be displayed at the front, rear, and on both sides of all vehicles (including rail cars) hauling hazardous materials, depending on quantity.
2. **DRIVER/PERSONNEL:** When the incident involves a truck, the driver of the truck may be able to supply information. Similarly, when the incident occurs on a business site, there may be personnel on scene with specialized knowledge of the nature of the material and safety protocols. Keep such personnel at the scene and available, if possible.
3. **SHIPPING PAPERS:** The driver of the truck or officials aboard a train transporting hazardous materials should have shipping papers that will identify hazardous materials and instructions for handling such materials. These documents are required to be kept **within arm's reach** of the driver in case he/she should become incapacitated.
4. **CHEM-CARDS:** To supplement the placarding system, many shippers of chemicals provide the drivers with Chem-cards (chemical identification cards) which provide emergency information. Although Chem-cards are subject only to voluntary use, the officer should ask the driver for the Chem-card. If located, retain the Chem-card and make it available for the Fire Department.
5. **EMERGENCY PLANS:** Emergency plans for certain businesses that store/use hazardous materials are on file in the Fire Department. Facilities managers might also be able to supply you with **Material Data Safety Sheets (MDSS)**. Each MDSS gives you information about a specific chemical.
6. A Hazardous Materials Information File is accessible on NLETS (National Law Enforcement Telegraph System) through CJIS Messenger in Operations. The Placard Number is needed to inquire on the file. This file can provide information related to health hazards, fire/explosion risk, and emergency action, firefighting techniques, first-aid/treatment, and containment suggestions.
7. **GUIDEBOOK:** The Department of Transportation, **Emergency Response Guidebook for Hazardous Materials Incidents** is available in every cruiser loaded onto packet clusters, and in the operations area. The most up-to-date information can also be obtained online. **Officers should familiarize themselves with this book PRIOR to an incident occurring.**

2. **INITIAL RESPONSE:**

Upon determining that an incident may involve hazardous materials, officers shall **immediately** advise Dispatch, who will notify the Waltham Fire Department. Upon their arrival, and confirmation of a hazardous material incident, the **Waltham Fire Department will assume authority and responsibility for initiation of emergency procedures and the Waltham Police will provide assistance as requested by the fire department official in charge.** The Fire Department has the training and protective clothing to safely enter a hazardous material incident.

- a. Approach the accident scene up-wind if possible. Await fire department personnel or hazardous material (HAZMAT) team personnel, who have special monitoring equipment.
 1. First responding officers and Street patrol supervisors should set a perimeter and shut off roads that lead to the incident location and hot zone. Guidelines to establishing an appropriate size hot-zone can be found in the above Emergency Response Guidebook.
 2. First Responding officers should inform the Communications Center of the type of Hazardous Materials placard posted on the involved vehicle or container as soon as possible.
 3. Personnel should **NOT taste, touch, or smell** anything that could be part of, or be contaminated by, the hazardous material.
- b. Officers should resist the urge to rush into a scene. **Most people killed at hazardous material scenes are killed trying to rescue dead bodies.** Officers should treat the scene as if it were a fire-engulfed motor vehicle and remember that **smoke is not harmless.** It is a gas that can contain deadly toxins. **Invisible vapors and fumes kill most first responders...and the first responders are almost always police officers.**
- c. Officers must note that standard police clothing provides almost no protection. Be aware of the 'Protective Clothing' warnings contained in the Numbered Guide (orange- bordered) pages of the Emergency Response Guidebooks. If the section states self- contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), be extremely cautious of entry into a hazardous material scene.
- d. **CONTAMINATION AREA:** If an officer finds themselves in a contaminated area, they should advise dispatch and prevent others from entering the contamination area. **Any officer potentially exposed to a HazMat chemical should follow the decontamination procedures set up by the fire department.**

3. **ICS PROTOCOL:**

ICS Protocol will be followed during any Hazardous Materials incident. The Fire Department will assume authority over the scene and will be responsible for initiation of emergency procedures. The Waltham Fire Department Deputy Chief will assume the role of Incident Commander.

a. **ESTABLISHING THE SCENE:**

1. **FIELD COMMAND POST:** The ranking Police Department official on the scene shall consult the Fire Deputy, who will determine a safe command post location for the specific incident. The Command Post will then determine the staging, medical & decontamination areas, and provide the order to evacuate or shelter in place.
2. **STAGING AREA:** A Street Patrol Supervisor or other Police Department employee should be assigned to the staging area for supervision of events, assignments, and activities performed by Police personnel. This shall be a separate person from that assigned to the Field Command Post.
3. **EMERGENCY TREATMENT/MEDICAL POST:** All persons evacuated by police personnel should be directed to a designated emergency treatment post, as the effects of many hazardous materials are not immediately apparent. Officers should try to obtain the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all parties on scene, especially persons who object to being detained at the designated treatment post.
4. **DECONTAMINATION STATION:** Emergency medical personnel/Hazmat teams should establish a decontamination station. Officers should attempt to segregate persons who may have been exposed to the hazardous materials and direct them to the decontamination station.
5. **EVACUATION ROUTE-** Refer to the separate EVACUATION PLAN outlined in the LEPC Manual. **Depending on the nature of the incident and the hazardous materials involved, a decision on whether to evacuate or shelter-in- place will be made by the Incident Commander.**

b. **MOVING INJURED PERSONS:** Under the direction of the Incident Commander, if a situation necessitates, an officer shall assist injured persons to be moved from incident area with as little physical contact as possible, and held in an area shielded from the scene until emergency aid is received.

c. **SUPPLEMENTAL PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):**

Personal Protective Equipment is available upon request at the Police Department

in order to supplement equipment available at the Fire Department. This equipment is stored in the garage adjacent to the gym and in the locker in the patrol armory. Each PPE bag includes:

1. PROMASK 40 Respirator mask & canister.
2. CPF 3 Tychem protective garment.
3. Protective boots.
4. Protective gloves.

NOTE: This equipment is to be utilized only under the direction and supervision of trained Fire Department and/or Hazardous Material personnel. The protective equipment is Level C protective and good for Cold Zone operations only.

Personnel Protective Equipment provides a measure of protection against Chemical or Biological exposure; however, it is **NOT** authorized for atmospheres considered immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH). **All HazMat areas should be considered (IDLH) until instructed otherwise by the Waltham Fire Department.**

4. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS – RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS:

If radiological materials are suspected or involved, do not approach. Radioactive materials will be identifiable by the yellow and black radiation warning (trefoil) symbol on the placard. Few radioactive materials authorized for shipment are deadly unless exposure occurs over an extended period of time. Officers should, nonetheless, avoid unnecessary contact with exposed persons, spills, or debris, and should avoid inhaling fumes. They should maintain an outer perimeter/cold zone. **Officers will not enter the hot zone.**

- a. **EXCLUSION AREA:** In general, an exclusion area of 2000 feet should be established for radioactive materials unless buildings or terrain shields the radiation source. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic should be stopped at the edge of the exclusion area.
- b. **DECONTAMINATION:** All officers and equipment involved in RADIO ACTIVE operations will be checked for readings above recommended levels and should not be returned to normal patrol until approved by the Radiation Protection Emergency Team.
- c. The appropriate county, state, and/or federal agencies will coordinate needed surface decontamination.

- d. If radioactive materials have spilled into storm drains, the City of Waltham Public Works Director, the Mayor and the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources must be contacted.

5. **NOTIFICATIONS:**

The Patrol Supervisor (or in their absence the Operations Supervisor) shall respond and ensure appropriate notifications are made, motor vehicle accident investigation personnel are assigned (if a motor vehicle is involved), and cooperation with participating agencies is maintained.

- a. The Officer-In-Charge shall immediately notify the Chief of Police and the Commanding Officer – Patrol Division, of any hazardous material incident. The Chief of Police will immediately notify the Mayor of the situation and will keep the Mayor advised of any changes so that the City of Waltham Emergency Management Plan may be implemented, if necessary, without delay.
- b. **LEGAL NOTIFICATIONS:** Agency notification requirements vary according to the material involved and the type of incident. The Fire Emergency Medical Services Dispatcher is responsible for making these notifications. The Police Street Patrol Supervisor is responsible for required after-incident reports.

6. **MEDIA RELEASES:**

Police officials are authorized to release information to the news media concerning areas to be evacuated and designated exit routes. Questions concerning the type of materials involved, hazards created, etc. should be referred to the Waltham Police Department Public Information Officer or a designee assigned by the Field Command Post.

7. **KEY AGENCIES:**

The Waltham Fire Department will have the primary responsibility for notification.

- a. **INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS:** The key contact agencies and persons are available for evaluation and assistance in the handling of hazardous material incidents, evacuating, etc. They must have information about the incident in order to assist. Every effort must be made to obtain the following information before contacting these agencies:
 - 1. Location of incident.
 - 2. Material involved and shipper if known.
 - 3. The color and number on placards.

4. Type of environment (residential, rural, business).
 5. Container size and amount of product leaking.
 6. If rail, number of cars from head of train.
 7. If aircraft, initial and number (tail number).
- b. Depending on the hazardous materials involved, one or more of the following agencies will be contacted. The Fire Department may request assistance in making these notifications.

Chemical transportation Energy Center (CHEMTREC)	800-424-9300
Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)	617-292-5500
State Police – Boston	617-727-6781
State Police – Framingham: Communications	508-820-2121
General Support	508-820-2121
State Fire Marshal	978-567-3100
	978-567-3111
	978-567-3112
Waltham Fire Department	781-893-4100
MBTA	617-222-1212

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify potential hazard (i.e. placard/markings or statement)
- ☐ Notify the Fire Department
- ☐ Fire Department Deputy will assume command of emergency
- ☐ Weather & wind conditions including directions & forecast
- ☐ Severity of hazard to citizens & emergency personnel
- ☐ Traffic and crowd control
- ☐ Placard and/or shipping info. DOT HANDBOOK
- ☐ Keep truck driver at the scene if possible for information
- ☐ Material name
- ☐ Property/vehicle owner's name
- ☐ Stay upwind
- ☐ Gas masks are ineffective against toxic vapors
- ☐ Do not drive through contaminated area
- ☐ Do not eat, drink, or smoke near scene
- ☐ Do not use flares (request barricades)
- ☐ Keep contaminated persons isolated from others
- ☐ Maintain a safe distance from scene (2000 ft. recommended)
- ☐ Evacuate as necessary