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## Hazardous Material Response

### 501.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Exposure to hazardous materials presents potential harm to department members and the public. This policy outlines the factors that members should consider when they encounter hazardous material, including the reporting of exposures and supervisor responsibilities.

#### 501.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Hazardous material** - A substance that by its nature, containment, or reactivity has the capability of inflicting harm during exposure; is characterized as being toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, an irritant, or a strong sensitizer; and thereby poses a threat to health when improperly managed.

### 501.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Humboldt County Probation Department (HCPD) to immediately contact the appropriate local emergency services to respond to hazardous material emergencies in order to protect the safety of probationers, the public, and those members who may be exposed to such incidents.

### 501.3 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL EXPOSURE

Members may encounter situations involving suspected hazardous materials, such as a chemical spill in the workplace. When members 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 to and mitigate most incidents involving hazardous materials and biohazards.

Members should not perform tasks or use equipment without proper training. Officers present at a hazardous material incident may require decontamination before they are allowed to leave the scene and should be evaluated by appropriate technicians and emergency medical services personnel for signs of exposure.

### 501.4 CONSIDERATIONS

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

- (a) Make the initial assessment of a potentially hazardous material from a safe distance.
- (b) Notify appropriate supervisors, the appropriate fire department and hazardous response units, and local law enforcement.
  1. Provide weather conditions, wind direction, a suggested safe approach route, and any other information pertinent to responder safety.
- (c) Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), as available and as trained, being cognizant that some hazardous material can be inhaled.

# Humboldt County Probation Department

## Probation Manual

### *Hazardous Material Response*

---

- (d) 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.
- (e) Attempt to identify the type of hazardous material from a safe distance using optical aids (binoculars or spotting scopes) if they are available. Identification can be determined by:
  - 1. Placards or use of an emergency response guidebook.
  - 2. Driver's statements or shipping documents from the person transporting the material.
  - 3. Information obtained from any involved person with knowledge regarding the hazardous material. Information should include:
    - (a) The type of material.
    - (b) How to secure and contain the material.
    - (c) Any other information to protect the safety of those present, the community, and the environment.
- (f) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely and without contamination.
- (g) Make reasonable efforts to secure the scene to prevent access from unauthorized individuals and to protect and identify any evidence.
- (h) Begin evacuation of the immediate and surrounding areas, dependent on the material. Voluntary evacuation should be considered; mandatory evacuation may be necessary and will depend on the type of material.
- (i) Establish a decontamination area when needed.

#### **501.5 REPORTING EXPOSURE**

Department members 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 member in an incident report that shall be forwarded via chain of command to the Chief Probation Officer as soon as practicable. If the affected member is unable to document the exposure for any reason, it shall be the responsibility of the notified supervisor to complete the report.

Injury or illness caused or believed to be caused by 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 as applicable.

##### **501.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

When a supervisor has been informed that a member has been exposed to a hazardous material, he/she shall ensure that immediate medical treatment is obtained and appropriate action is taken to mitigate the exposure or continued exposure.

# Humboldt County Probation Department

Probation Manual

## *Hazardous Material Response*

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To ensure the safety of members, PPE is available from supervisors. PPE not maintained by this department may be available through the appropriate fire department or emergency response team.