MNL10-EB/Dec. 1990

INITIAL EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT—INITIAL RESPONSE ACTION

Action Checklist for Assessment and Response to a Hazardous Material Incident

EXPECT HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TO BE INVOLVED IN ALL INCIDENTS.

☐ **Control Access.**

STAY OUT UNTIL ALL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ARE IDENTIFIED AND ADVICE ON EMERGENCY ACTION AND PERSONAL PROTECTION HAS BEEN OBTAINED.

☐ **Are Hazardous Materials Involved?**

- *For Fixed Facilities.* Check pre-emergency plan of the facility to locate hazardous materials storage and use locations and for material identification. Contact facility supervision directly.

Chemical Transportation Emergency Center (CHEMTREC)®

For Chemical Emergency
Spill, Leak, Fire, Exposure, or Accident

Phone: Day or Night
In continental United States call toll free *800/424-9300
Outside the continental United States (except Canada) call collect *202/483-7616
(In Canada call CANUTEC collect *613/996-6666)

*Add long-distance access number if required.

CHEMTREC® can usually provide hazard information warnings and guidance when given only the NAME OF THE PRODUCT and the NATURE OF THE PROBLEM. For more detailed information and/or assistance, or if product is unknown, attempt to provide as much of the following additional information as possible:

Name of Caller and Call Back Number
Products Involved
Nature of the Problem
Location of the Problem
Name of Shipper or Manufacturer
Container Type
Railcar or Truck Number
Carrier Name
Weather Conditions

- *For Transportation Situations.* Check for container shapes, markings, colors, placards, identification number, and labels that may indicate the presence of a hazardous material; contact employees of the transportation company for shipping paper information and location of hazardous materials; check vehicle identification numbers and/or initials to permit product identification from shipping papers when the carriers' dispatcher has been contacted. Mixed and nonplacarded loads may contain materials that can become dangerous and even explosive if they spill and/or mix. CHEMTREC may help with product identification.

☐ **Make Certain You Have the Correct Spelling of the Name of the Material.**

- Look for UN/DOT and/or CAS number for correct identification. (Spelling of dissimilar materials may be confused.)

☐ **Determine Hazards and Properties of Each Material, Emergency Response Action, Personnel Protection, and Evacuation Recommendations Using:**

- *CHEMTREC* with its direct contact with the shipper.
- *Emergency Response Manuals* or other on-scene data.

☐ **Estimate the Potential Harm.**

- Predict the area affected by the situation. Weather conditions including wind direction and speed should be obtained and monitored.
- Determine risk to people, property, and environment within the affected area.

☐ **Determine If Your Involvement Will Favorably Change the Outcome or Will Make Things Worse.**

☐ **Do You Have the Resources, Personnel, and Equipment Available to Favorably Change the Outcome Now?**

- If nothing is to be gained, do not get directly involved. Seek additional assistance.

☐ **Priority for Your Direct Involvement in a Hazardous Materials Incident:**

- *People*

  Are people exposed to risk?

  Can people trapped or exposed to risk be safely removed from the danger area?

  If you must enter the danger area to rescue people, can you move them to safety without becoming trapped, injured, or killed yourself?

  Are response personnel trained for this type of emergency?

  How will you protect yourself and those you hope to rescue from the harmful effects of the hazardous materials involved? (Protective equipment per 29 CFR-1910.20 represents the minimum when going into an unknown or hazardous area.)

- *Property*

  Are property, buildings, or systems (communication and power lines, etc.) exposed to risk?

  Will your direct involvement prevent or reduce damage to exposed property or systems without harm to yourself or others?

- *Environment*

  Can you safely prevent or reduce harm to the environment?

  Can you safely stop a leak or contain a spill?

  Do you have the proper safety equipment to do the job without injury to yourself and others?

  Do you know how to safely accomplish what you want to do?

☐ **Have You Contacted Facility or Carrier Supervisors and Discussed Your Proposed Response with Them Before Taking Action?**

☐ **Use Personal Protective Equipment, Which Should Include Protective Clothing and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.**

- Protective clothing is not universal for hazardous material spills. Make certain your equipment, including gloves and boots, are those recommended by the manufacturer for the material involved in the spill. Check UN number and CAS number. You may also want to check with chemical manufacturer or CHEMTREC.
- Avoid breathing vapors and skin contact with vapors and spilled material.
- If clothing or equipment becomes contaminated, leave the danger area and remove contaminated items as soon as possible. Wash material from skin.

☐ **How Will You Contain the Spilled Material If It Is Safe and Possible to Do So?**

- It may be the best course of action to allow the material to burn if it is on fire. Other initial on-site control and containment methods should be considered.

☐ **If at Any Time You Are Unsure What to Do Next or You Feel the Situation Is Getting Out of Control You Should:**

1. Withdraw to a safe location, based on wind direction and type of product.
2. Keep others away from the hazard.
3. Get help or advice.

☐ **One Person Should Be in Command of the Overall Operations.**

- Consult specialists who know the hazards of the products involved and who can advise on a safe and effective response.
- Consult officials of the carrier or facility.
- Consult state and national contingency plans.

☐ **Establish a Command Post a Safe Distance from Incident.**

- *All* response actions must be coordinated through the command post.
- A record should be kept of decisions and actions and a time log kept to indicate sequence of events.

☐ **Establish a Patrolled Perimeter for Emergency Response Personnel a Safe Distance from the Spilled Material to Control Access.**

This should be at the distance listed in emergency guides, if available. Another patrolled perimeter must be established at a greater distance from the spill to keep the public and other nonessential personnel away from the active area and out of the command post.

☐ **Establish Communications.**

- *Radio and Phone Communications*
  1. All communications equipment should be compatible. Make one frequency for the on-scene commander.
  2. Telephone service may be necessary for security and flexibility.
- *Public Information*
  1. Appoint a public information office to conduct news conferences at specified times at a specified location, which will not interfere with control operations.
  2. Factual information should be provided but no opinions given on the cause of the problem or responsibility.
  3. News media can be helpful if a limited evacuation is necessary. Reasons for evacuation and information on where evacuees should go should be given.

This card is designed to be used in conjunction with a training manual, *A Guide to the Safe Handling of Hazardous Materials Accidents, Manual 10*, available from ASTM, 1916 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19103 (215/299-5400).