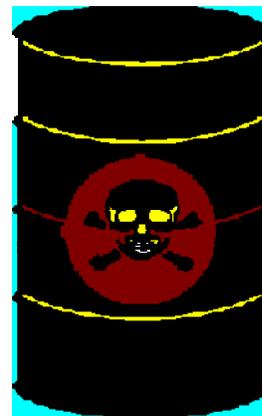




Dispatcher's Guide for WMD Incidents



September 2004

Disclaimer

The contents of this document are not to be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless so designated by other authorizing documents.

The use of trade names or manufacturers' names in this document does not constitute an official endorsement of any commercial product. This guide may not be cited for purposes of advertisement.

Preface

A Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terrorist incident, involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive weapons, on a Department of Defense (DoD) installation or in a civilian community poses a significant threat to military personnel and civilians. A WMD terrorist attack will present major challenges to an installation's or a community's emergency response teams. No matter what type of emergency takes place the initial information concerning the event will be gathered by the individual in the Emergency Dispatch Center. Asking the right questions and obtaining vital information will play an enormous part in the initial minutes of the incident. The information being provided to the Incident Commander and the responders will be an important part of the process used to assess the risk and make life and death decisions. Sending first responders to a scene with as much accurate information as possible will save lives.

The Emergency Dispatch Center, during the initial stage of a response has a critical role in the success or failure of an emergency operation as the responders on the scene. WMD incidents combine the priorities of a mass casualty incident and the danger of a large-scale hazardous materials incident. This guide has been designed to aid the call taker or dispatcher collecting the initial information for the emergency responders, in order to ensure a coordinated safe response during a WMD incident. It also provides basic guidance that can be provided to callers to reduce the hazards to the caller and others at the incident scene.

The purpose of this document is to provide the emergency response communication center with checklists to be used as tools to be integrated within their current system. It is designed to supplement and enhance current procedures. It can be adapted for large and small dispatch centers. The order of the questions came from several workshops with dispatch supervisors. Each jurisdiction may adapt this information to fit its needs.

Acknowledgements

The Department of Defense and the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) wish to thank the following agencies for participating in the Military Improved Response Program (MIRP) Emergency Dispatch Working Group and contributing their time and expertise to the successful completion of this guidebook.

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, Fire Department

Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, Fire Department

Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, Security Forces Squadron

Arlington County, Virginia, Emergency Communications Center

Baltimore County, Maryland, 911 Center

City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Fire Department

City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Police Department

Fort Meade, Maryland, Fire Department

Harford County, Maryland, Emergency Operations Center

Maryland State Police

Union County, New Jersey, Local Information Network Communication Systems Agency

Much of the information that went into this handbook was distilled from various workshops, reports, exercises and technical studies that were conducted as part of the Domestic Preparedness Program's (DPP) Improved Response Program (IRP). The DPP IRP brought together a vast assortment of emergency response organizations from local, state and federal agencies for the purpose of developing enhanced response guidelines for chemical and biological terrorist incidents. ECBC would like to acknowledge their contributions to the base documents on which this guide was founded.

Finally, the Department of Defense and ECBC would like to thank the MIRP team who coordinated and developed this handbook.

Mr. Gregory Mrozinski, ECBC MIRP Team

Mr. Pete Farlow, ECBC MIRP Law Enforcement and Emergency Dispatch Team Leader

Dr. Paul Fedele, ECBC MIRP Fire and Emergency Services Team Leader

Mr. John Siegmund, Titan Corporation

Mr. John Lazier, Titan Corporation

Mr. John Frank, Deputy Chief (retired) Howard County Fire and Rescue Service, Consultant

Table of Contents

Preface	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
General Emergency Questions	1
Chemical Incident Questions	4
Caller Advice for Chemical Agents	6
Overt Biological Incident Questions	7
Caller Advice for Biological Agents	9
Radiological Incident Questions	10
Caller Advice for Radiation Hazards	12
High-Yield Explosive Incident Questions	14
Caller Advice for High-Yield Explosive Hazards	15
References	16
Acronyms	17

General Emergency Questions

What is the location of your emergency? **This should be the first question asked, this information allows the dispatcher to identify the event location and send a responder to the scene in case the caller gets disconnected.**

- What is the nature of your emergency?
- Is anyone sick, injured or showing any unusual signs or symptoms?
- Approximately how many people are ill or injured and where are they located?
- Is the emergency inside or outside of a building or structure?

IF INSIDE – What type of building or structure is it?

- How long ago did this take place?
- What is your name?
- Can I have a phone number that I can contact you at?
- Have you noticed anyone or anything out of the ordinary at the scene?

NOTES: Based on the initial information provided by the caller, the 911 center operator may identify additional underlying circumstances that lead the operator to be suspicious of the nature of the root cause of the situation. Based on this, the 911 operator may use any number of pre-established checklists to gather more information regarding the incident/situation and to determine what notifications to make and responding units to dispatch. If any indicators on the following pages are referenced in the initial 911 call, operators should go to the appropriate checklist for that type of emergency,

proceed with further questions, and provide the recommended guidance to the caller.

Key Indicators

Unusual Substance – **Chemical/ Biological**/HAZMAT

- Unusual Liquids
 - Amber-colored, oily, odorless
 - Brownish liquid
 - Yellow-brown liquid
 - Light yellow to brown oily liquid
 - Colorless to pale yellow oily liquid

- Unusual Powders
 - Color – White, yellowish, grayish or brown
 - Consistency – Heavy like salt, medium like baking soda, light like talcum

Unusual Odors – **Chemical**/HAZMAT

- Chemical Warfare Agent
 - Newly mown hay, grass or corn
 - Bitter Almond
 - Garlic, onion or mustard
 - Fruity aroma
 - Slight fishy or musty odor
 - Camphor-like odor (Moth balls)

NOTE: These odors may be normal under some circumstances; however, if the odor is unusual for the scene this may indicate a possible chemical warfare agent release.

Any unusual spray or mist involving a liquid or powder may be a **Chemical** or **Biological** incident.

Suspicious Packages

- Liquid stains – **Chemical/Biological**
- Unusual odor – **Chemical/Biological**
- Powder or dry residue – **Biological, Chemical,** or **Radiological**

- Hazard labels or markings – **Chemical**, **Biological** or **Radiological** depending on the markings
- Threat specified by a note – **Chemical**, **Biological** or **Radiological** depending on the specified threat.

NOTE: Any suspicious package may also be an explosive device and the appropriate response for a suspected explosive device should be considered.

Incident Location

- Chemical plant or chemical storage facility – **HAZMAT**
- Nuclear power plant – **Radiological**
- Facility that uses or stores radioactive material – **Radiological**
- Biological research/medical facilities – **Biological** and possibly **Radiological**

Victim signs and symptoms

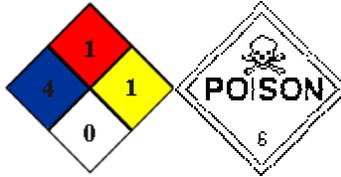
If there are **numerous people** experiencing all or some of the following symptoms go to the **Chemical** section.

- **Nausea**
- **Vomiting**
- **Convulsions**
- **Headache**
- **Dim Vision/Dilated Pupils**
- **Difficulty Breathing**
- **Skin Reddening**
- **Skin Blisters (Normally not present until 4 to 24 hours have passed since exposure)**

NOTE: Normally, victims exposed to biological agents and radiological materials do not present with immediate symptoms. If victims' present signs and symptoms immediately following an incident this indicates a possible chemical or other HAZMAT incident. Be aware that victims exposed to high concentrations may have the onset of symptoms in less than an hour.

If the caller indicates an explosion at a location that stores or uses radioactive substances, use the **Radiological** checklist.

Chemical Incident Questions



- What are the complaints or symptoms of injured or sick?

NERVE	BLISTER	BLOOD	CHOKING
Nausea	Skin Reddening	Convulsions/Twitching	Coughing
Difficulty Breathing	Skin Irritation	Vomiting	Skin Irritation
Skin Reddening	Burning Eye Pain	Clammy Skin	Difficulty Breathing
Vomiting, Drooling	Vomiting	Burning Eye Pain	Tearing of Eyes
Convulsions	Sneezing	Coughing/Chest Pain	Burning Eye Pain
Headache, Tearing	Skin Blisters	Involuntary Eye Closing	Nausea
Dim Vision/Red Eyes	Respiratory problems	Rapid Breathing	
Dilated Pupils			
Sweating			

Notes: The acronym **SLUDGE** can be used for symptoms; **S**alivation, **L**acrimation (excessive tearing), **U**rination, **D**efecation, **G**astro-intestinal distress and **E**mesis (vomiting).

- Do you notice any unusual odors? If so leave the area.
- If so please describe the odor as best you can.
- If not, do not re-enter the area to check for an odor.
- Unusual Odor:
 - *Newly mown hay, grass or corn* – possible choking agents
 - *Bitter Almond* – possible Cyanide or blood agent
 - *Garlic, onion or mustard* – possible mustard agents
 - *Fruity aroma* – possible G type nerve agents such as Tabun, Sarin
 - *Camphor-like (Moth Balls)* – Soman
 - *Fishy or musty-* (HN) Nitrogen Mustard
 - *Geranium-like* - Lewisite

Chemical Incident Questions

- Was there an unusual mist or liquid in the area?
- If a liquid is present is it contained or mobile?

NOTE: The caller should not re-enter the area to check for liquids.

- Color of liquid
 - Unusual *clear, pale-yellow or brownish oily liquid* – possible mustard agent
 - **Amber-colored oily liquid** - VX nerve agent
 - **Colorless to brownish liquid** - G series nerve agents
- Did you hear any spraying or hissing noises?
- Did you see what produced the unusual material? If so describe what it was.

Notes:

Caller Advice for Chemical Agents

- Immediately evacuate the area and wait for emergency response personnel. If possible, **move upwind and uphill**. If the device is indoors, move outside and away from the building
- Do not attempt to clean up an unknown liquid, leave the item where it was found
- If you feel that you have a hazardous foreign substance on your skin or clothing, it may help to remove your clothing and wash your entire body with soap and water. If no soap is available, flush your body with a lot of water.
- Keep potentially exposed individuals away from others to limit possible cross-contamination

Overt Biological Incident Questions



NOTE: A covert, no notification, biological attack will not normally produce immediate casualties or emergency calls to 9-1-1. The following information pertains to suspicious packages and packages that involve an overt threat by note, letter or other type of communication.

- Has the package been opened? If not, do not open the package or letter.
- Describe the suspect package or envelope.
- What makes you think the package is suspicious?
- Describe any stains on the outside of the envelope or package.



EXAMPLE

If the stains appear to have been caused by a liquid, consider the [Chemical Section](#) or this section.

If the package has been opened:

- Was the package accompanied by a verbal or written threat? If so, what does it say?

If the caller replies that the package was not accompanied by a threat the dispatcher should follow up with the following question.

- What makes you think there is a problem?
- Was there an unusual substance in the envelope or package?

Overt Biological Incident Questions

- Describe the substance if possible.
- Consistency – Is it granular, powdery, liquid, etc?
- Color – Is it white, brown, yellowish?
- Did anyone contact the substance or get it on them?
- Where?

Symptoms:

Notes:

NOTE: A covert biological attack will not produce immediate casualties and emergency calls to 9-1-1. The dispatcher should be alert for an abnormal increase in EMS responses to patients with symptoms matching gastro-intestinal distress, flu-like symptoms, nausea, vomiting and headaches. Any spike in EMS runs with callers presenting these symptoms should be reported to the dispatch supervisor.

Caller Advice for Biological Agents

- Immediately evacuate the area and wait for emergency response personnel.
- If possible, **move upwind and uphill.**
- Do not touch the suspected material, device, or package.
- Do not attempt to clean up the material.
- Suggest to others that they leave the contaminated area.

IF CALL INVOLVES SUSPICIOUS POWDER IDENTIFIED AT A MAIL PROCESSING FACILITY:

Shutdown any high-speed mail processing equipment that may have handled the suspicious mail.

- Wet down your clothes and remove them if you feel that you may have contacted the suspicious substance. Place your clothing in a plastic bag if possible.
- Wash your entire body with soap and water. If no soap is available, flush your body with a lot of water.
- Keep potentially exposed individuals away from others to limit possible cross-contamination.
- Depending on the size of the incident, record the names of everyone who may have been exposed.
- Attempt to keep everyone on the scene until emergency responders arrive.
- Explain to the caller that even if they are contaminated there is no need for alarm. Most exposures to anthrax and other powders can be treated with medication.

Radiological Incident Questions



- Are you in an area or facility that stores or uses radioactive material?

IF YES:

- What type of facility?
- What type of radioactive material is used or stored at your facility?
- Do you know if any radioactive storage containers or materials have been damaged?
- Is there any radioactive material missing? If so what type? How much? When was it last accounted for? Has the Department of Energy (DOE) or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) been notified?

IF NO:

- Was there a verbal or written threat?
- Is there a suspicious package?
- If so, what makes you think it is suspicious?
- Are there radioactive markings or warnings on a suspect package or device?
- If so, describe the markings.



EXAMPLE

Radiological Incident Questions

NOTE: If the package has indications of a liquid or powder, also consider the **Chemical Section** and the **Biological Section**.

Notes:

Caller Advice for Radiation Hazards

IF THE INCIDENT OCCURRED INDOORS AND THE FACILITY IS INTACT

- Immediately evacuate the area and wait for emergency response personnel. If possible, **move upwind and uphill**. (Always consider TIME/DISTANCE/SHIELDING)

IF THE INCIDENT OCCURRED OUTDOORS

- Immediately evacuate the area and wait for emergency response personnel.
- Seek shelter indoors, in the basement of a building if possible.

INDOORS OR OUTDOORS

- Identify any markings on the package from a safe distance.
- Do you have any radiological instruments or detectors available at the incident location?

IF YES:

- Is there a trained operator available?
- If so, have that person take readings and direct everyone out of the contaminated area to a consolidated location with substantial shielding.
- Have that person provide the readings to the Incident Commander.

IF NO:

- Immediately evacuate the area and wait for emergency response personnel. Seek shelter indoors, in the basement of a building if possible.
- Have anyone that may have been exposed to the material wet down his or her clothes, remove them, and place them in a plastic bag. (Double bag if possible.)
- Wash your entire body with soap and water. If no soap is available, flush your body with a lot of water.

High-Yield Explosive Incident Questions



Is there a suspicious package?

IF YES:

- Describe the package.
- Did you notice any characteristics of the device; size, batteries, timers, wires, etc?
- Is it accompanied by a verbal or written threat?
- If so, what does it say?

NOTE: If the package has indications of a liquid or powder, also consider the **Chemical Section** and the **Biological Section**.

IF NO:

- Was there an explosion?
- Where was the explosion?
- Did you see the origin of the explosion?
- Describe the extent of the damage.
- Are there fires caused by the explosion?
- Approximately how many injured are there?

Notes:

Caller Advice for High-Yield Explosive Hazards

IF THE DEVICE HAS NOT EXPLODED

- Do not touch or handle the device.
- Do not use a cell phone or 2-way radio within 300 feet of the suspected device.
- Evacuate the area as well as floors immediately above and below the device.

IF THE DEVICE HAS EXPLODED

- Stay clear of any damaged or unstable area.
- Warn others to stay clear of any damaged or unstable area.
- Attempt to account for all personnel that were in the area.
- Be alert for any other suspicious packages that may be a secondary device such as another bomb.

References

- 1) Tempest Publishing LLC, 1998, *First Responder Chem-Bio Handbook*, Alexandria, VA, Tempest Publishing
- 2) U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command, Homeland Defense Business Unit, 2003, *Firefighters' Quick Reference Guide for Responding to Chemical and Biological Terrorist Incidents*
<http://www.ecbc.army.mil/hld/ip/reports.htm>
- 3) Marks, Michael, Red Hat Publishing Company, Chester, MD, 2002, *Emergency Responders Guide to Terrorism; A Comprehensive, Real-World Guide to Recognizing and Understanding Terrorist Weapons of Mass Destruction*
- 4) Maniscalco, Paul M. and Christen, Hank T., Pearson Custom Publishing, Boston, MA, undated, *Terrorism Response Field Guide for Law Enforcement*

Acronyms

CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives
DOE	Department of Energy
DoD	Department of Defense
DPP	Domestic Preparedness Program
ECBC	Edgewood Chemical Biological Center
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
IRP	Improved Response Program
MIRP	Military Improved Response Program
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
SLUDGE	Salivation, Lacrimation, Urination, Defecation, Gastro-intestinal distress and Emesis
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction