

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS (HAZMAT)**

### **WHAT IS HAZARDOUS MATERIALS?**

- Hazardous materials are any material that is flammable, corrosive, an oxidizing agent, explosive, toxic, poisonous, etiological, radioactive, nuclear, unduly magnetic, a chemical agent, biological research material, compressed gases, or any other material that, because of its quantity, properties or packaging, may endanger life or property.

### **HAZMAT FACTS:**

- Hazardous chemicals are used in industry, agriculture, medicine, research, and consumer goods.
- They are most often released as a result of transportation accidents or because of chemical accidents in plants.
- Varying quantities of HAZMAT are manufactured used or stored at an estimated 4.5 million facilities in the U.S.
- As many as 500,000 products pose physical or health hazards and can be defined as hazardous chemicals.
- Most victims of chemical accidents are injured at home.
- Never mix household hazardous chemicals or waste with other products. Incompatible chemicals such as chlorine bleach and ammonia, may adversely react, ignite, or explode.
- Never use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products, or pesticides near an open flame (e.g., pilot

light, lighted candle, fireplace, wood burning stove, etc.) Although you may not be able to see or smell them, vapor particles in the air could catch fire or explode.

### **HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL EMERGENCY:**

- Get out of the residence immediately if there is any danger of fire or explosion. Do not waste time collecting items or calling the fire department when you are in danger. Once you are safe, call the fire department from outside the home (a cellular phone or a neighbor's phone). Stay upwind and away from the residence to avoid breathing toxic fumes.
- Call the poison control center, 9-1-1, hospital emergency room, or local pharmacy to receive emergency advice if someone has been exposed to a household chemical. Have any containers of the substance readily available in order to provide requested information.
- Take immediate action if the chemical gets into the eyes. Delaying first aid can greatly increase the likelihood of injury. Flush the eyes with clear water for a minimum of 15 minutes, unless authorities instruct otherwise.
- Discard clothing that may have been contaminated. Some chemicals may not wash out completely.

### **LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS OF TOXIC POISONING:**

- Be prepared to seek medical assistance if you have any of the following unexplained symptoms: difficulty breathing, irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract; changes in skin color; headache or blurred vision; dizziness, clumsiness or lack of coordination; cramps or diarrhea.

## **ACTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE A HAZMAT INCIDENT:**

- Determine evacuation routes and be ready to evacuate should an incident occur.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit.
- Determine the best place in your home to shelter if you are directed to shelter-in-place.
- Develop an emergency communications plan and ensure all family members know how to use it if you were to be separated.
- Keep fire extinguishers in home and car.
- Post emergency contact numbers (e.g., poison control, hospital emergency room, local pharmacy, etc.) by the telephone.

## **ACTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING A HAZMAT INCIDENT:**

- Listen to local radio or television stations for detailed information and instructions.
- Stay away from the area to minimize the risk of contamination.
- Stay upstream, uphill, and upwind.
- Stop and seek shelter in a permanent building if you are in a vehicle. If you must remain in your vehicle, keep windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner or heater.
- Bring pets inside if directed to shelter-in-place. Fill up sanitized bathtubs and/or large sanitized containers for

an additional water supply and turn off the intake valve to the house. Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible. Turn off air conditions and ventilation systems. Find a room that is above ground and has the fewest openings to outside. Seal the room by covering each window, door, and vent using plastic sheeting and duct tape. Use material to fill cracks and holes in the room such as those around pipes. If gas or vapors could have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or a towel. Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated.

### **ACTIONS TO CONSIDER AFTER A HAZMAT INCIDENT:**

- Act quickly if you have come into contact with or have been exposed to hazardous chemicals. Follow decontamination instructions from local authorities. You may be advised to take a thorough shower or you may be advised to stay away from water and follow other procedure.
- Seek medical treatment for unusual symptoms as soon as possible.
- Place exposed clothing and shoes in tightly sealed containers. Do not allow them to contact other materials. Call local authorities to determine proper disposal.
- Advise everyone who comes in contact with you that you may have been exposed to a toxic substance.

- Report any lingering vapors or other hazards to 9-1-1.
- Do not return to the area, if you were directed to evacuate, until local authorities give the all clear.
- Listen to local radio and television for the latest updates.

### **ACCIDENT VICTIMS:**

- You should not try to care for victims of a hazardous materials accident until the substance has been identified and authorities indicate it is safe to go near victims.
- Once it is safe to do so, move the victim(s) to fresh air and call for emergency medical care. Remove contaminated clothing and shoes and place them in a plastic bag.
- Cleanse victims that have come in contact with chemicals by immediately pouring cold water over the skin or eyes for at least 15 minutes unless authorities instruct you not to use water on the particular chemical involved.