



NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL

CHAPTER: 46.3.4

TITLE: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EXPOSURE AND RESPONSE

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PURPOSE

Hazardous materials present potential harm to department members, the public and the environment because of their public presence and uncontrolled exposure. This Chapter provides general guidelines for departmental members who may encounter suspected hazardous material so they may take certain steps to protect themselves and the public.

POLICY

1. The New Orleans Fire Department (NOFD) is the lead agency in all non-criminal HazMat incidents.

DEFINITIONS

Hazardous Material (HazMat)—Any gaseous, liquid, or solid material which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or biological composition poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health, the environment, or property when transported in commerce, or which material is identified or designated as being hazardous by rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (La R.S. 32:1502(5)).

Nitrous Oxide (N2O) – A colorless odorless gas commonly used as an analgesic in medicine and dentistry, a propellant in the food service industry, and an oxygen booster in the automotive racing industry.

SAFETY AND RESPONSE GUIDELINES

2. Employees may encounter situations involving suspected hazardous materials, such as at the scene of a traffic collision, chemical spill or fire. When employees encounter a suspected hazardous material, they should take steps to protect themselves and other persons.
3. The following steps should be considered at any scene involving suspected hazardous materials:
 - (a) Make the initial assessment of a potential hazardous material from a safe distance.

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.

- (b) Notify the New Orleans Fire Department and New Orleans Emergency Medical Service (NOEMS). Provide weather conditions, wind direction, a suggested safe approach route and any other information pertinent to responder safety.
 - (c) Wear personal protective gear if available, being cognizant that some hazardous material may quickly volatilize into a form which is readily inhaled.
 - (d) Begin evacuation of the immediate and surrounding areas as a precaution even if the material is unknown using the **Emergency Response Guidebook** until properly trained members of the New Orleans Fire Department determine otherwise.
 - (e) Attempt to identify the type of hazardous material from a safe distance using optical aids (binoculars/spotting scopes) if they are available. Identification can be determined by:
 - Placards and use of the Emergency Response Guidebook.
 - Driver's statements or shipping documents from the person transporting the material.
 - Information obtained from any person involved with knowledge regarding the hazardous material.
 - (f) Obtain information from any involved party who has knowledge regarding the hazardous material. Information should include:
 - The identity of the material.
 - How to secure and contain the material.
 - Any other information to protect the safety of those present, the community and the environment.
 - (g) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely and without contamination.
 - (h) Make reasonable efforts to secure the scene to prevent access from unauthorized personnel.
4. A responder entering the area of a hazardous material event may require decontamination before he/she is allowed to depart the scene and should be evaluated by appropriate technicians and medical professionals for signs of exposure.
 5. The New Orleans Fire Department is the agency trained and equipped to properly respond and mitigate most hazardous materials.
 6. Hazardous materials shall not be transported by a department member or stored in the Central Evidence & Property Section.
 7. Acids and flammable substances shall only be processed and transported by HazMat Technicians or other governmental agencies utilizing the appropriate vehicle and transportation technique to be determined by the qualified technician and considered safe.

SAMPLING OF POSSIBLE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

8. HazMat Technicians shall determine if a sampling of the explosive compound or chemical agent can be safely extracted for evidentiary processing.
9. Acids, flammable substances, and hazardous materials shall not be processed, transported, or stored as property. Scenes where these compounds pose a hazard to the public shall be processed by the appropriate Federal or State agency or competent independent contractor governing disposal of hazardous waste.

10. If a sampling of the substance can be safely retrieved for forensic processing, it shall be the HazMat Technician's or other governmental agency's responsibility to transport same to the appropriate facility for processing.
11. Substances whereby samples cannot be safely extracted shall be disposed of in a manner considered safe by the HazMat Technician or other governmental agency and in accordance with Federal and State Law governing disposal of hazardous material. The process of disposal shall be documented in writing and photographed by the assigned District officer. The photographs shall be deposited as evidence in the Central Evidence and Property Section.

REPORTING EXPOSURE

12. Department members who believe they have been exposed to hazardous material shall immediately report the exposure to a supervisor.
13. 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 the incident report.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

14. When a supervisor has been informed that an employee has been exposed to hazardous material on duty, he/she shall ensure that immediate medical treatment is obtained, and appropriate action is taken to treat the exposure.
15. The supervisor shall take all necessary steps to ensure that all persons, clothing and equipment (including vehicles) which may have been contaminated is identified, isolated and contained pending decontamination and inspection by a qualified HazMat technician.
16. To ensure the safety of employees, safety equipment may be available through supervisory personnel. Safety items not maintained by the Department will be obtained through the (NOFD).

NITROUS OXIDE (N2O)

17. Officers who seize tanks containing nitrous oxide in the course of their duties and require assistance in the proper disposal of the material and/or the tank may contact the New Orleans Fire Department (NOFD) at Station 7, 1441 St. Peter Street where the on-duty Hazmat Officer will dispose of it properly. The on-duty NOFD Hazmat Officer can be contacted at (504) 858-7005.
18. If the officer requires assistance with a tank on-scene, NOFD Communications will dispatch the on-duty NOFD Hazmat Officer to assist.
19. If the officer needs the tank for evidence purposes the Hazmat Officer will purge the tank of any remaining gas and return the tank with the valve in the open position to NOPD when complete.