



Today's discussion is from the Hazardous Materials Category.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ENCOUNTERS

Employees who may encounter hazardous materials in the field should be trained as mandated by OSHA 1910.120 (q), First Responder Awareness Level. However, employees should always recognize that hazmat encounters require special precautions.

- Hazardous materials in the field include, but are not limited to:
 - Clandestine drug waste – waste as a result of “meth” labs, etc., which may look like common household trash at first glance. Drug lab waste can be identified by the presence of gallon plastic jugs, large plastic bags, 5-gallon buckets, and laboratory equipment (tubes and beakers).
 - Midnight dumping – may be recognized by the presence of barrels or other containers, discoloration of land, plants, or water, and/or dead vegetation and animals.
 - Transportation accidents – truck, rail, or pipeline accidents may result in the spillage or release of hazardous materials that may result in danger to life, property, or resources.

- In all instances, self-protection is your primary responsibility.

- Respond to all encounters by implementing the Three Rs:
 - Recognize: Attempt to identify the substance using the North American Emergency Response Guide, occupancy/location, placards/labels, container shapes/colors, and/or MSDS shipping papers.
 - Retreat: Move upwind, upgrade, or upstream; isolate the material; and deny entry to the site. Guidelines for isolation distances include: 150 feet for a minor incident (1 drum, 1 bag, etc.); 500 feet for a major incident (more than 1 drum, etc.); 300 feet for a residential and light commercial incident; 1,000 feet for an open area; 2,500 feet for an incident with BLEVE potential; 2,500 feet for the staging area (must be upwind with vehicles in a headed-out position)
 - Report: Notify your supervisor and agency dispatcher. Request hazmat assistance via a safe route.

References:

[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

[Safety and Health for Field Operations Manual, BLM--1112-2](#)

Hazmat-First Responder Awareness Training Guide, Local Fire Department

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

ONLINE | MAIL: 6 Minutes For Safety Task Group • 3833 S. Development Ave • Boise, ID 83705 | FAX: 208-387-5250

6 Minutes Home