



# Fitchburg State University Police Department

<b>Subject:</b> HAZARDOUS MATERIAL	
Reference: IACLEA: N/A MPAC: N/A	
Rescinds: Section 19	
<b>Effective Date:</b> February 16, 2021	<b>Review Date:</b>
<b>By Order of:</b> Michael J. Cloutier, Chief of Police	

General Order

# 17.2.7

## PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the initial response and investigation of incidents on the university property involving hazardous materials.

## DISCUSSION

- A. Hazardous materials are used in various manner on campus. The possibility of an incident involving misuse, accidental spill, or malicious spreading is a reality. The extent of damage from an incident involving a hazardous material depends largely on the response of emergency personnel, and their ability to correctly identify and deal with such an incident.
- B. Officers will generally not have sophisticated equipment with them to determine whether a substance is actually hazardous, and must rely on their physical and common sense perceptions to determine whether a substance constitutes a threat to public health and the environment, or a violation of various environmental laws and regulations.

## POLICY

It is the policy of the Fitchburg State University Police Department to provide guidelines to properly handle incidents involving the potential or actual presence of a hazardous material.

### MATERIAL DATA SAFETY SHEETS (MSDS)

- A. A Material Data Safety Sheet (MSDS) is a required document that contains information for the safe handling, use, storage and disposal of potentially hazardous chemicals. Global agencies (e.g., OSHA, EPA), require that all potentially hazardous chemicals have information on file to ensure the safety of all personnel that are involved in manufacturing, distributing, transporting and using these materials in their day-to-day operations. According to the Massachusetts Department of Safety and the Massachusetts Right-to-Know Law, manufacturers and distributors are required to deliver a safety data sheet to each buyer of these materials. In turn, buyers, or employers, are required to make this information readily accessible to their employees who may come in contact with chemicals in the workplace.
- B. A web-based system called MSDSOnline contains an inventory list that is broken down by Department. Communications personnel can access this inventory at the following link: <http://www.msds-online.com/>

User name: [REDACTED]

Password: [REDACTED]

- C. Currently multiple campus departments use a wide range of chemicals. The majority of chemicals used by Biology and Chemistry, Industrial Technologies, Humanities, Communications Media, Print Services, Capital Planning and Maintenance, and the Recreation Center have been entered into MSDSOnline.

### PROCEDURES

#### A. Response

1. **General:** Because of the potential hazard that might exist from contact with a hazardous material, a cautious approach should be made when responding to and investigating such incidents as spill or exposure.
2. **Initial Response:** Officers approaching incident which may involve a hazardous materials spill, should take the following actions:
  - a. **Securing the Area.** Any evidence of leaking liquid or vapor is sufficient to alarm police of potential danger and to seal off the area until positive identification can be made by the Fitchburg Fire Department, who should be called immediately. Fitchburg State University's Environmental Health and Safety Officer should be notified for all on campus exposures.
  - b. **Class of Hazardous Material.** Officers need to consider the nature of the substance, where it is located, and how it is being handled, in order to determine if the substance poses a hazard. A substance is generally hazardous if it is flammable or ignitable, corrosive (causes chemical burns), reactive or explosive (gives off toxic fumes or can cause an explosion), or toxic (poisonous or radioactive). Hazardous material identification should be made via:
    - 1) MSDS Online\_(See MSDS above)

- 2) Placards. Placards are required to by Federal Law be displayed at the front, rear, and on both sides of all vehicles (including rail cars) hauling hazardous materials, depending on quantity.
  - 3) Driver. When the incident involves a truck, the driver of the truck may be able to supply information. Responding officers should keep the driver at the scene and available, unless he or she is injured and removed for emergency medical care.
  - 4) Shipping papers. The driver of a truck or officials aboard a train transporting hazardous materials should have shipping papers that identify hazardous materials, and instructions for handling such materials.
  - 5) Chem-cards. To supplement the placard system, many shippers of chemicals provide the drivers with Chem-cards (chemical identification cards) that provide emergency information. Although Chem-cards are not a legal requirement, the officer should ask the driver for the Chem-card. If located, retain the Chem-card and make it available to the Fire Department.
  - 6) Other indicators of a hazardous substance are if it causes itching, burning or irritation of the eyes, nose, mouth, or skin; causes dizziness or shortness of breath; has an unusual chemical or petroleum odor; causes discoloration or staining of the soil or other substances; creates an oily sheen or rainbow in the water; consists of or emits smoke or vapor; stresses vegetation or kills fish; causes when contained hissing sounds such as escaping gas or pinging sounds due to expansion or settling; or drums in which it is held exhibit signs of bulging or corrosion from the inside.
3. **Approach to the Scene.** Responding officers should approach the accident scene of a suspected hazardous materials release up-wind if possible. They should maintain visual and radio contact with another officer as soon as one is on the scene. If radiological materials are involved, officers must not approach.
- a. Officers should quickly size up the situation and view a hazardous material spill from a distance before approaching. Unless an immediate lifesaving rescue is necessary and can be accomplished without the loss of the officer's life, officers should maintain a safe distance and await Fire Department or HAZMAT team personnel who have special monitoring equipment.
  - b. A safe distance must be maintained if officers sense itching, burning, or other irritation of the eyes, nose, mouth, or skin, and a physician should be consulted as soon as practicable.
  - c. Officers should not enter confined areas containing hazardous substances or inhale directly from the source of the substance, or make physical contact with the substance. Officers should not eat or drink at the scene, and should avoid getting the substance on their shoes or clothing, to avoid contaminating their home or the workplace.
  - d. Officers should prevent exposure of a hazardous substance to fire, heat, or water. Smoking materials, road flares, matches or lighters, and even motor vehicles can generate sufficient sparks or heat to ignite a hazardous substance, and some substances emit a toxic gas when exposed to water.

- e. Containers of hazardous materials should not be opened, as exposing the substances to the air can release fumes or cause an explosion.
4. **Notifications Required.** The first responding officer will be in charge at the scene until relieved by a Supervisor or by Fire Department command personnel. The first responding officer shall request that Dispatch notify the on duty sergeant or OIC, and dispatch of the Fitchburg Fire Department.
  - a. Upon their arrival and confirmation of a hazardous material incident, the Fitchburg Fire Department will assume authority and responsibility for initiation of emergency procedures. Police personnel shall provide assistance as requested by the Fire Department official in charge.
  - b. If confirmed the on call Lieutenant shall be notified who will consult with the Chief of further emergency protocols to include notification to the community.
5. **Patrol Supervisor Responsibilities:** The Shift supervisor or OIC shall respond and ensure that appropriate notifications are made, motor vehicle crash investigation personnel are assigned (if a motor vehicle is involved), and cooperation with participating agencies or campus department is maintained.
6. **On Call Lieutenant:** The On call lieutenant shall immediately notify the Chief of any conformed hazardous material spill, release or other incident that could result in the evacuation of persons from any part of the university. The Chief or designee shall coordinate with the Fire Department and other members of the University's core response team designated by the University's Emergency Management Plan.
7. **Vehicle Crash Investigation:** Normal crash investigation procedures will be suspended until such time as appropriate clearance has been received; only then will the crash be investigated.

## B. Evacuation

1. When the possibility of an evacuation of all residents and campus community members exists, the following shall be considered:
  - a. **Personnel Requirements.** All officers are subject to callback to provide additional personnel.
  - b. **Method of Notifying Persons to be Evacuated.** The university will use the RAVE Alert notification system in accordance with **GO 17.1.4 EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS**
  - c. **Size of Area and Population to be Evacuated.** This must include consideration of any special needs population and handicapped. Is it best to evacuate or shelter in place? (See **GO 17.1.6 EVACUATION PLAN**)
  - d. **Use of Mass Transportation to Move Evacuees.** The availability of School Buses, Transit Buses and any other modes of mass transportation must be determined.

- e. **Availability and Location of Potential Shelters.** All students who have the ability to leave campus on their own and return home will be the primary means of sheltering individuals. Those who cannot return home or do not have a place to evacuate to will be reviewed and discussed in accordance with the university's Emergency Management Plan and senior university leadership.
- f. **Area Security.** Plans must be implemented for security of evacuated areas to prevent theft or premature return.

**C. Contact Information**

1. **Contact Agency Information Requirements:** Contact agencies (Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), Emergency Management, the NRC, FAA, DEQE, etc.) are available to assist in evaluating and handling hazardous material incidents, hazard mitigation, cleanup, evacuation, and care of evacuees. Depending on the agency called and the service they will provide, these agencies must have information about the incident in order to assist properly. Every effort shall be made to obtain the following information before contacting these agencies:
  - a. Location of incident.
  - b. Material involved and shipper, if known.
  - c. The color and number of labels.
  - d. Type of environment (residential, rural, business).
  - e. Container size and amount of product leaking.
  - f. If rail, the number of cars from, the head of the train.
  - g. If aircraft, tail initial and number.
  - h. Number of evacuees and number of children, elderly, and special needs individuals and expected arrival time at shelters.
2. **Key Agencies:** The Fitchburg Fire Department has the primary responsibility of notification. Depending on the hazardous materials involved, one or more of the following agencies will be contacted if the Fire Department is unable to notify them, or requests assistance in doing so:
  - a. FSU EH&S:, 978-665-3756
  - b. Fitchburg Fire Department, 978-343-4801
  - c. Chemical Transportation Emergency Center (CHEMTREC), 1-800- 424-9300 contact only at fire department request.
  - d. Department of Environmental Quality Engineering, 617-292-5500.

- e. Pan Am Railways – formerly Boston and Maine/Railroad and Guilford Transportation Industries – emergency number, (800) 955-9208.

**D. Investigation/Reports**

1. Upon the request of the Fire Department, and/or any other agency with jurisdiction in the investigation of hazardous materials incidents, the department shall provide full cooperation and support.
2. Supervisors shall ensure that officers complete full incident report(s) detailing their actions during hazardous materials incidents and/or any subsequent investigation.

**E. Investigation of Improper or Criminal Handling of Hazardous Substances**

1. **Indicators of Improper Handling:** Telltale signs of potentially illegal or improper handling and disposal of hazardous substances include:
  - a. Dumping into floor drains, sinks, and toilets.
  - b. Discharge into underground storage tanks.
  - c. Disposal into storm drains and manholes.
  - d. Direct disposal into the ground or into pits.
  - e. Disturbed soil, excavation, or other signs of burial.
  - f. Abandonment of containers on vacant properties and in rural
  - g. Drums, bags, and other unmarked or uncontained substances mixed with trash, construction debris, or other commercial wastes.
  - h. Unmarked or inaccurately marked drums or other containers.
  - i. Large quantities of unmarked containers kept over a long period of time in a closed or otherwise hard to see area.
  - j. Discharges to surface water which contain solids, unusual color or sheen, or a strong odor.
  - k. Off-road, rural, nighttime or other surreptitious and unusual activities by truck.
  - l. Emissions to air of smoke or vapors containing unusual colors, chemical smells, or where direct human contact is likely.
  - m. Abandoned box trailers or other vehicles containing drums or bags.
  - n. Any of the above suspicious discharges by use of hoses running from a tank to a floor drain, discharge of liquid from a truck to a storm drain by hose, etc.

2. **Investigative Procedures:** Since officers cannot be expected to be certain they are dealing with hazardous substance crime, if they note any combination of the above indicators, they have reason to suspect a hazardous substance is involved and should consult with a Supervisor, who shall determine whether request the communication center to call the appropriate agencies listed below for follow-up. Supervisors should first contact should FSU Environmental Health and Safety, to advise them of calls to:

a. **Wetland or Waterways Pollution:**

- 1) Fitchburg Conservation Commission, (978) 343-4801,
- 2) Environmental Police, (800) 623-8075.

b. **Workplace Toxic Exposures:**

- 1) Fitchburg Board of Health, (978) 345-9582, or
- 2) Commonwealth Department of Labor and Industries, (617) 727-1932.

c. **Heath Effects of Exposures:**

- 1) Fitchburg Board of Health, (978) 345-9582,
- 2) Commonwealth Division of Environmental Health Assessment, (617) 727-7170,

d. **Infectious Medical Waste:**

- 1) Department of Public Health, Division of Communicable Diseases, (617) 522-3700 ext. 420,

e. **Pesticides:**

- 1) Commonwealth Pesticide Bureau, (617) 727-3020.

Approvals:

  
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Chief of Police

Date 02/16/21