

**UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

No. 330

Supercedes: NA

Effective: October 14, 2002

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Dated: September 6, 2002

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**HAZARDOUS MATERIAL INCIDENTS**

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- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for all members of the Upper Merion Township Police Department in instances in which hazardous material are encountered.
  
- II. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Upper Merion Township Police Department to respond to hazardous material incidents in a manner that will best protect the lives, health and safety of the residents, visitors, and emergency service responders in Upper Merion Township and surrounding communities.
  
- III. **CROSS-REF:** Upper Merion Township Emergency Management Plan, Hazardous Material Incidents (adopted by Upper Merion Township Resolution 87-24)
  
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDEBOOK (ERG): A book published by the U.S. DOT that quickly aids first responders in identifying the specific or generic hazards present during an incident. A more reliable means of identification of the material should be used after the initial response.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: A hazardous material means a substance or material capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety and property and includes, but is not limited to all petrochemicals, liquid gases, compound gases, acids, corrosives and other flammable, toxic or noxious substances.

HOT ZONE: An area immediately surrounding the hazardous material spill or leak. Everything within this area is considered contaminated. It will be initially determined by using the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG). If the substance is unknown or cannot be readily identified, 2000 feet is considered a safe distance for any hazardous substance.

PLACARD: A diamond shaped sign with colors, letters, descriptive drawing, and numbers that are displayed on the sides and ends of a motor vehicle, railcar, freight container, or portable tank containing hazardous materials. The number will correspond to the U.S. DOT ERG.

## V. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. FIRE DEPARTMENT: The Fire Department shall have primary responsibility for the investigation, control, removal, and reporting of hazardous material incidents to the appropriate state and federal agencies.
- B. POLICE DEPARTMENT: The Police Department shall have responsibility for the investigation and reporting of traffic accidents involving hazardous materials. Otherwise, the police department's primary responsibilities will be to establish perimeter control, to assist the Fire Department in establishing a command post and staging area, and to provide other such other assistance to the fire department and other agencies that may be required to ensure the continuing safety and well being of the community.

## VI. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. INITIAL RESPONSE AND ASSESSMENT:
  - 1. Upon the report of a hazardous materials incident, the Communications Center shall dispatch the closest police unit and a police supervisor. When dispatching the initial call, the Communications Center should indicate the type of material and the nature of the emergency, if known.
  - 2. Police units should approach the scene from a direction that is preferably upwind and shielded from direct exposure. Upon arrival, officers should:
    - a. Not enter into the area of the spillage or leak,
    - b. Use the public address system or other means to clear persons from the immediate area of the spillage or leak,
    - c. Render aid to those in immediate danger if possible without unduly jeopardizing personal safety,
    - d. Use gloves or whatever protective equipment is available to protect exposed surfaces of the body.

3. As soon after arrival as possible, the first officer on the scene should perform a quick assessment. If a hazardous materials incident is confirmed, officers shall notify the Communications Center of the following:
  - a. Exact location,
  - b. Type of incident (industrial, vehicle, railway, highway, residential, etc.),
  - c. Basic description (explosion, fire, gas release, spill, leakage, etc.),
  - d. Name of hazardous material, class and quantity involved, if known.
  - e. Information on casualties.
4. The identification of hazardous materials may be accomplished by the descriptive data in shipping documents, container markings, package labels and vehicle placards. Officers should refer to the ERG to aid in identification of visible placards and labels. The most reliable source of information is the shipping papers. Other sources of information on the identity of hazardous materials are the shipper, vehicle operator, or plant manager. In the event that identification information is not readily available, immediate contact shall be made to CHEMTREC.
  - a. CHEMTREC, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, provides information about the product for those at the scene of emergencies, then promptly contacts the shipper of the product for more detailed assistance.
5. A perimeter shall be established around the hot zone with consideration given to the type of incident and the potential risk of exposure to surrounding areas. Once a perimeter is established, it shall be the responsibility of the police department to ensure that no unauthorized personnel enter the perimeter.
6. Officers should detour all traffic around the scene, with traffic cones and barricades preferred as traffic control devices in lieu of flares.

**B. NOTIFICATIONS:**

1. The Communications Center shall immediately ensure that the following are notified when advised of a confirmed hazardous material incident:
  - a. Fire Department,
  - b. Emergency Medical Services,
  - c. Shift Supervisor,
  - d. Chief of Police or a Command Officer,
  - e. Additional personnel and agencies as requested.

C. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES: The shift supervisor shall be considered the Police Department Incident Commander until relieved by a superior officer. Upon his/her arrival at the scene, the supervisor shall:

1. Re-evaluate the incident and determine additional manpower needs for security, traffic, investigation and evacuations, if necessary.
2. Set up a Command Post outside the perimeter of the hot zone. This should be accomplished in cooperation with the fire department whenever possible.
3. In conjunction with the Fire Department Commander, designate a staging area outside the perimeter of the hot zone for the following:
  - a. Ambulances
  - b. Additional responding personnel
  - c. Equipment
4. Ensure the establishment of access routes for responding personnel and equipment.

D. EMERGENCY TREATMENT:

1. Those individuals that possibly have been in contact with the hazardous material shall be segregated and detained until they can be examined by Emergency Medical Services personnel. Names and addresses of all persons involved shall be obtained.
2. A triage or transfer point should be established, in conjunction with the Fire Department and EMS, where the injured may be evaluated for further medical treatment.
3. In the event a police officer comes into contact with any of the suspected hazardous material, medical assistance should be sought immediately.
4. Emergency decontamination of the injured shall be required before anyone can leave or be taken from the scene, to avoid or at least minimize secondary contamination to ambulances and hospitals.
5. In the event that clothing becomes contaminated, assistance shall be sought from Emergency Medical Services personnel or Hazardous Materials personnel for the proper disposal of the garments.

E. EVACUATION/SHELTER IN PLACE:

1. The safety of persons and the protection of property should be the first priority in an effected area. Careful consideration should be given to the danger or hazard that is posed to people living or working in close proximity to the scene of an incident. In order to determine the proper course of action, a number of factors must be taken into account, including weather conditions, population, time of day, and traffic patterns.
2. Any decision to evacuate and the scope of any evacuation, or to shelter in place, will be made jointly by the command staff of the Police Department and Fire Department.
3. Evacuation and shelter in place notifications shall be made in accordance with the appropriate protocol outlined in the Upper Merion Township Emergency Management Plan, Hazardous Material Incidents.
4. An evacuation area may be enlarged as conditions change and time permits.
5. Every reasonable effort must be made to safeguard the homes and property of those evacuated. The security of the evacuated area shall be maintained by limiting access to essential personnel and by police patrols.

F. TRAINING:

1. All new police officers are required to be trained to the basic level of hazardous materials response awareness, and on the procedures outlined in this policy and the Upper Merion Township Emergency Management Plan, Hazardous Material Incidents.
2. All officers are required to attend annual refresher training on hazardous materials response, and on the procedures outlined in this policy and the Upper Merion Township Emergency Management Plan, Hazardous Material Incidents.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE REVIEWED: ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION: All Police Officers  
Township Manager  
File