

HEMS
SPECIAL OPERATIONS
RADIATION EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Date: March 1
Last Revised: 2/8/2024

Section 10-21

Radiation Emergency Procedure

Dispatch Responsibilities

All responding units must be notified if the dispatcher suspects a radiation emergency.

Ensure that the local Fire Department and Police Departments are aware of the incident.

Crew Responsibilities

Pre-Incident

If radiological response equipment is stocked on the vehicle, the crew must inspect/check all equipment at the start of every shift, in accordance with in-house policy/procedure.

On-Scene: First Responders

1. Ensure that the appropriate state and local agencies are notified.
2. Remain upwind of the incident. **EVEN IF PATIENTS ARE VISIBLE/OBVIOUSLY INJURED, DO NOT ENTER THE SCENE UNLESS PROPERLY TRAINED AND EQUIPPED!!!**
3. Notify all responding units of the upwind position.
4. Isolate the area and deny entry of others.
5. Attempt to identify the type of exposure involved (irradiation or contamination). If unknown, treat the incident as a contamination.
6. The jurisdictional fire department will establish and utilize the Incident Command System for these incidents.
7. If patients are visible and ambulatory, but are contaminated, then establish an area of refuge upwind of the incident site where they may be isolated for decontamination. Do not enter this area to begin triage or treatment unless properly trained and equipped.

On-Scene: Secondary Responders

1. The Incident Command System will be utilized for these incidents. In a radiological incident, the medical response is only a very small portion of all the events/responses being coordinated. In addition, many things must take place before the medical responders are allowed to perform their duties (i.e., containment of the incident, establishing “safe” areas for personnel to work, establishing a decontamination area, etc.). All secondary responders must work within the Incident Command structure. Most likely a Medical Officer will be appointed from the fire department personnel on the scene, to coordinate the medical response. All secondary response personnel must report to this individual.

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1. Report to the location specified by the Incident Commander/Medical Officer on scene.
2. Fire department personnel must ensure that contaminated patients are not a source of contamination prior to treatment/transportation. This includes removing clothing and jewelry that might trap radioactive materials.
3. When transporting/treating contaminated patients, personnel must wear protective equipment appropriate for the remaining risk. A fire department representative will provide advice/assistance in these situations.

Post-Incident

1. All responding personnel , vehicles, and equipment must be checked by radiological personnel for possible contamination prior to being released to return to duty.
2. All personnel should shower and change clothing prior to returning into service.
3. Some form of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing may be appropriate for some personnel. Each employer is responsible for this process.