

BETHLEHEM POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

SUBJECT: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS

CALEA STD. REF.

AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:

REVISED:

EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/2007

APPROVED: 9/2007

NOTE: In any civil action against any individual, agency or governmental entity, including the State of New Hampshire, arising out of the conduct of a law enforcement officer having the powers of a peace officer, standards of conduct embodied in policies, procedures, rules, regulations, codes of conduct, orders or other directives of a State, County or local law enforcement agency shall not be admissible to establish negligence when such standards of conduct are higher than the standard of care which would otherwise have been applicable in such action under State law. (RSA 516:36).

I. POLICY:

This policy deals with hazardous materials transported along the roadway, and incidents involving the accidental release of such materials.

II. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this general order is to establish guidelines, responsibilities, and procedures for first responders to hazardous materials emergencies.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. A hazardous material is any compound or substance which is listed by the U.S. Department of Transportation as a hazardous material in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations and includes flammables, combustibles, corrosives, oxidizers, poisons, radioactive materials, explosives, etiological agents and other materials which because of their handling, storage, processing or packaging may have detrimental effects upon the public safety or the environment.

IV. PROCEDURE:

- A. Motor vehicle crashes and other incidents involving the release or potential release of hazardous materials involve more than one agency and require a cooperative, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency response. In most cases the Fire Department should take the lead and the Police Department should provide assistance as necessary in traffic

control, evacuation, etc., and in investigation and enforcement against any violation of State law by the carrier.

- B. Upon arrival at the scene of an incident involving the actual or potential release of hazardous materials, the first responding officer shall determine if gas clouds or liquids are leaking from the vehicle. If they are, do not approach the vehicle. Have dispatch notify the Fire Department. If a placard indicates that a hazardous material is being transported, not the type of placard, inform dispatch, and look for instructions in the D.O.T. Emergency Response Guide that is carried in your cruiser. You may use field glasses or binoculars to make this determination from a safe distance. Follow the instructions in the guide book relative to evacuation or protection of the scene, mitigation of the leakage, etc. If there does not appear to be any leak or immediate danger, determine from the shipping papers if there are hazardous materials on board, and if so, consult the Emergency Response Guide. Shipping papers will usually be found on the seat or in a pocket on the driver's door.
- C. Do not approach the vehicle if fumes or fire are present. Limit access to the scene to essential personnel with necessary safety clothing and equipment.
- D. Take any immediate action necessary to use sand, soil or material to block liquid spills from running into drainage systems, wetlands, or waterways, including confiscating materials from passing trucks or obtaining necessary materials or equipment from the public works department.
- E. Keep everyone except Fire Department personnel away from spillage or fumes. Do not approach if fumes are present unless you are using self-contained breathing apparatus. If it is absolutely necessary to approach in order to save a life, do so from upwind, do not come into physical contact with spillage, and if you feel lightheaded or ill, retreat at once.
- F. Assist the driver in notifying his/her company of the incident. They may be of assistance in providing cleanup or other appropriate response.
- G. If anyone is or has been exposed, make rescue personnel aware of the name of the product and its manufacturer, if known. Emergency medical personnel and hospitals should be briefed.
- H. Secure and record as much pertinent information as possible, including names of the chemicals involved, name, address and phone number of the carrier and shipper, and information about the driver and vehicle, and the location of any stream or water supply affected.

- I. Assist the Fire Department officer-in-charge with any road closure or evacuation of homes or businesses that is necessary to ensure public safety. Special consideration must be given to any down wind exposures.
 - a. Traffic must not be allowed to drive through and spread spilled material, or to drive through hazardous fumes.

- J. If clothing, shoes, or equipment has come in contact with hazardous chemicals, they may need to be washed, safely disposed of, or otherwise neutralized.