General Order

Houston Police Department

ISSUE DATE:	NO.
August 27, 2018	600-41

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-41, dated July 9, 2013

SUBJECT: WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

POLICY

All chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) incidents, real or hoax, shall be treated as *significant events.* Procedures specified in General Order 200-10, **Emergency Management**, and the Houston Police Department *Emergency Response Plan* (ERP) shall be implemented as appropriate. The ERP is located on the department's Intranet Portal. Police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and others are considered to be first responders when responding to incidents involving or suspected of involving CBRNE weapons.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Biotoxin. Poisonous substance produced by a living organism.

CBRNE. The five categories of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) materials including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive.

Cold Zone. The designated area where there is no contamination and that contains the command post, the staging area, and other support functions necessary to control the incident. This area may also be referred to as the "clean zone" or "support zone."

Consequence Management. Activity performed primarily by the Houston Fire Department (HFD) after a CBRNE attack that may include isolating the hazard area, caring for victims, performing decontamination, administering emergency medical treatment, and recovery.

Emergency Decontamination. Rapid but methodical decontamination of individuals near the scene of the incident that is designed to save lives by removing the contaminating agent from the victim. This activity is performed primarily by HFD utilizing large amounts of water and is accomplished in [redacted].

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Personnel. HFD paramedics and other medical personnel, including doctors and nurses, at the scene of large-scale disasters.

HAZMAT. Hazardous material.

HAZMAT Personnel. HFD personnel who deal with any solid, liquid, or gas that has the capability of producing adverse effects on the health and safety of people or other living organisms.

Hot Zone. The area immediately surrounding the CBRNE material, extending far enough to prevent the spread of adverse effects to persons outside this designated zone. Hot zone is also referred to as the restricted zone, exclusion zone, danger zone, or kill zone.

Inner Perimeter. The area designated as a control line surrounding the warm zone. A line between the outside edge of the warm zone and the cold zone.

Mass Decontamination. Rapid decontamination of several persons simultaneously that is designed to quickly reduce the effects of the contaminant and limit the spread of the CBRNE agent. This activity is performed primarily by HFD utilizing large amounts of water and may occur in [redacted]

Outer Perimeter. The area designated as a crowd control line surrounding the incident. A line between the general public and the outside edge of the cold zone.

Pathogen. Disease causing agent.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Protective equipment worn by individuals and designed to provide protection from the hazard present. PPE can range from something as simple as a long-sleeved shirt to cover unprotected skin to a completely encapsulated gas-tight suit with self-contained breathing apparatus.

The purpose of the department issued first responder PPE (Blue Bag) is to allow the officer to avoid some types of contamination, minimize risk, and escape the threat; it is not for work within the threat area. The PPE in the Blue Bag does not protect officers against all threats and the suits are not rated for splash and gas vapors.

Warm Zone. The area between the hot zone and cold zone where [redacted]

Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD).

a. Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas: bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces (113 grams), missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce (7 grams), mine, or device similar to the above.

b. Any weapon involving toxic or poisonous chemicals.

c. Any weapon involving a biological agent or disease organism.

d. Any weapon that is designed to release radiation at a level dangerous to human life.

1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Response to a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) incident is very similar to the response to a hazardous material incident as described in General Order 200-10, **Emergency Management**.

The following are three primary differences between a WMD incident and a hazardous material incident:

a. A WMD incident is more likely to involve material with greater toxicity and more severe consequences. Therefore, the required response is commensurately larger and more complicated.

b. A WMD incident is always a crime because the purpose is to kill or seriously injure people. Therefore, the scene of a WMD attack shall be processed as a crime scene.

c. A reported WMD incident may be a hoax perpetrated by someone with the intent of creating fear and chaos. Reporting a hoax WMD threat is a criminal act. Therefore, every WMD incident, real or hoax, shall be investigated by the Homicide Division.

2 SAFETY GUIDELINES

Safety of first responders is critically important. If the first responders become contaminated, ill, or incapacitated, then they become part of the problem and cannot effectively rescue victims or initiate other critical actions that could serve to mitigate the situation and prevent other persons from becoming victims. Officers shall utilize time, distance, and shielding as protective actions.

Officers responding to a WMD incident shall adhere to the following guidelines:

[redacted]

3 METHODS OF CBRNE ATTACK

Chemical Attack

A chemical attack is the spreading of toxic chemicals with the intent to do harm. The toxicity of chemicals varies greatly. Some are acutely toxic (i.e., cause immediate symptoms); others are not. Chemicals in liquid or vapor form generally lead to greater exposures than chemicals in solid form.

Many variables affect the concentration of a chemical including wind and the volatility of the chemical. The release of toxic chemicals in closed spaces (e.g., tunnels, airports, financial centers) could deliver doses high enough to injure or kill a large number of people. In an open area, a toxic chemical cloud (plume) would become less concentrated as it spreads and would have to be released in large quantities to produce mass casualties.

Dissemination methods used for a chemical attack include the following:

[redacted]

Biological Attack

A biological attack is the intentional release of a *pathogen* or *biotoxin* against humans, plants, or animals.

Dissemination methods used for a biological attack include the following:

[redacted]

Radiological Attack

A radiological attack is the use or spreading of radioactive material with the intent to do harm. This attack could deliver radiation doses high enough to cause immediate health effects or fatalities in a large number of people or may not be immediately identified.

Due to potentially lethal levels of radiation emitted from medical or industrial sources, this type of attack can be performed covertly (i.e., no dissemination needed) or overtly (e.g., sprayed, scattered, explosion).

A "dirty bomb" is one type of radiological dispersal device that uses a conventional explosive to disperse radioactive material over a targeted area and is primarily used to:

[redacted]

[redacted]

Nuclear Attack

A nuclear attack is the use of a device that produces a nuclear yield. A nuclear explosion is caused by an uncontrolled chain reaction that splits atomic nuclei (i.e., fission) or combines atomic nuclei (i.e., fusion) to produce an intense wave of heat, light, and air pressure.

Although a nuclear device is difficult to construct, this attack has the largest impacted area.

Explosives

An improvised explosive device (IED) attack is the use of a "homemade" bomb and/or destructive device to kill, destroy, incapacitate, harass, or distract. Because they are improvised, IEDs can come in many forms, ranging from a small pipe bomb to a sophisticated device capable of causing massive damage and loss of life. An IED can be:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

For proper response to explosive threats, see General Order 600-36, **Bomb Threats, Explosive Devices, Explosions**.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

This section outlines the responsibilities regarding an incident involving a CBRNE material.

First Responding Officers

Upon arrival at the scene of an incident determined to involve a CBRNE material, the first responding officers shall do the following:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Homicide Division

The Homicide Division shall be responsible for investigating all CBRNE incidents, including those believed to be hoaxes. Investigators from the Homicide Division shall go to the scene and shall be responsible for completing the original incident report and the *Significant Event Report.*

Criminal Intelligence Division (CID)

CID's Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center (HRISC) (a.k.a. Fusion Center) along with the [redacted] shall complete an intelligence report for the Chief of Police regarding CBRNE incidents in which a device or substance is discovered and there is a criminal intent in its use. This report shall include information regarding the initial investigation; the results of any laboratory analysis performed; any local, national, or world trends; and the probability of future threats.

In all CBRNE incidents, HRISC/[redacted] will support the Homicide Division and any other responsible division or law enforcement agency in the investigation of the incident.

[redacted]

5 DECONTAMINATION

On-scene *mass decontamination* and/or *emergency decontamination* of individuals may be necessary to save lives and to limit the spread of the CBRNE agent. HFD personnel shall perform the decontamination with law enforcement support to maintain order and issue directions.

All persons leaving [redacted] shall be considered to be contaminated. Every effort short of arrest or use of physical force should be made to get all contaminated persons to remain in [redacted] until they are properly decontaminated. Officers shall attempt to get voluntary compliance with the decontamination procedures.

A number of persons, particularly those who do not feel symptoms, may refuse to comply with decontamination directives and insist on leaving the scene. Based on information from EMS personnel, officers shall advise those persons leaving the scene to seek medical evaluation as soon as possible. [redacted]

Police Personnel and Weapons

All police personnel leaving [redacted] shall remain in [redacted] until evaluated by HFD and decontaminated if necessary.

If the HFD incident commander at the scene deems it necessary, all police personnel required to do so shall submit to *emergency decontamination* in accordance with HFD procedures. This includes decontamination of all firearms, which shall be done at the scene by HFD using water or other mixture deemed appropriate by HFD.

After the decontamination procedure, officers shall retain possession of their firearms. All other police equipment and personal property, including vehicles, shall be left at the scene if the HFD incident commander so orders.

6 HOAX INCIDENTS

[redacted]

In any case, the incident report shall list all potential victims so that health officials can contact them at a later date if further precautionary measures are needed. Each potential victim shall be given instructions about personal precautionary measures that should be taken after leaving the scene. This information will be available from EMS or HAZMAT personnel.

[redacted] The person with care, custody, and control of the location involved should make any decision regarding evacuation.

7 RELATED GENERAL ORDERS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

200-10, **Emergency Management**
400-18, **Responsibility for City and Other Government Property**
600-05, **Special Threat Situations**
600-36, **Bomb Threats, Explosive Devices, Explosions**
600-37, **Hate Crimes**

HPD Emergency Response Plan (ERP)
HPD Annex K: Detection and Response to Radiological/Nuclear Incidents

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