

Hazardous Substances

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Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police (WYP) must protect its officers and members of staff from hazardous substances which they may come across during the course of their duties and has a procedure on how to deal with them.

These substances which may be hazardous to health are ever present, and are regularly transported throughout the county. They take the form of chemicals, such as explosives, flammables, toxics, oxidisers and corrosives; biological substances; or radioactive materials.

This policy procedure aims to explain the types of hazards and their warning signs, the thresholds when low hazard products become harmful, initial actions and safety precautions to take, when and how clothing and equipment must be decontaminated, and what happens post incident regarding health monitoring and investigation.

Scope

This policy applies to all police officers and police staff.

Legislation

Principles

Legislation requires that at premises where hazardous substances are present, companies must display appropriate signs and follow certain procedures:

- Chemicals – the appropriate diamond hazard warning signs must be displayed;
- Chemicals in amounts defined in Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) –
 - For bottom tier sites, register with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and prepare a major accident prevention policy; and
 - For top tier sites, comply with action for bottom tier sites, and prepare and test off-site plans;
- Hazardous substances – Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations (NIHHS) require that sites meeting the criteria notify the HSE;
- Radioactive materials –
 - Display radioactive 'Trefoil' at the premises;
 - The site requests a registration certificate from the Environment Agency which issues this, and send copies to the local authority, public

- register, and West Yorkshire Fire Service;
 - West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service maintain records of premises;
 - The certificate requires any theft or loss to be notified without delay to the police;
 - Held in pipelines – pipeline safety regulations require inter-agency planning arrangements in respect of pipelines operating above certain pressure levels.
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Transporting Hazardous Substances

- If a hazardous substance needs to be identified, then legislation requires that where it is transported it must be indicated by prescribed signs on the vehicle, including:
 - The hazard warning panels on vehicles;
 - The equivalent European Hazard Identification (HI) markings;
 - The radioactive material 'Trefoil'; and
 - Diamond shaped Hazard Warning signs.
 - Vehicles transporting certain hazardous substances are required to carry information in writing and a consignment note in the cab of the vehicle which provides more details about:
 - The consignment;
 - The dangers it may cause;
 - Methods of dealing with any incident; and
 - The contact details it may contain for specialist assistance and advice.
 - Other hazardous loads may require a safety data sheet issued by the Environment Agency to be carried in the vehicle which provides similar details.
 - Similar legislation applies in respect of prescribed signs and markings on carriages and containers where hazardous substances are being transported by rail.
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Harmful Levels of Low Hazard Products

Summary

- Seemingly low hazard products, e.g. milk, beer, soft drinks and detergents, are highly polluting when spilled in sufficient quantities.
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Thresholds

The threshold limits are:

- Detergents – 25 litres
 - E.g. washing powder, washing up liquid, shampoos, soaps, car cleaning products;
- Disinfectants – 25 litres
 - E.g. household bleach, Dettol;
- Food stuffs – 250 litres

- Most have the potential to cause problems but of particular concern are: sauces, syrups, salt, sugar, milk, cream, yoghurt and vinegar;
- Beverages – 250 litres
 - E.g. soft drinks, beers and lagers, wines, spirits;
- Fertilisers – 50 litres
- Paints and dyes – 50 litres
- Inorganic powders – 250kg
 - E.g. silt, sand, cement, chalk, gypsum, plaster;
- Other organic liquids or slurries – varying threshold limits
 - E.g. blood, offal, farm yard slurries, sewage sludge, fire fighting foams, anti-freeze, cutting lube, cooking oils, glycerine, alcohol, latex, water and soluble polymers.

Note – the threshold quantities listed are only a rough guide.

Impact

- The polluting effect of low-level hazardous products varies.
 - Some are directly toxic to or smother aquatic life, while others can lead to de-oxygenation of the body of water.
 - Fertilisers and detergent can be both toxic and de-oxygenating.
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Containment

- Every effort must be made to contain the above products.
 - In the event of a spillage of any of these substances, the individual must contact the Environment Agency should they need more information about their possible effects.
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**Increased
Harmful Effects**

- Other seemingly harmless products, e.g. tyres, rubbish and straw, can cause problems if on fire, as water used to fight the fire can be highly polluting.
 - Burnt out vehicles are also potential sources of hazardous substances.
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Safety Precautions

General

- Individuals face potential danger at or near the scene of incidents involving hazardous substances.
- Serious or fatal effects can result from contact with, inhalation or ingestion of, or exposure to even the smallest quantities of a large number of substances.
- Gases which are heavier than air may accumulate at ground level.
- Some chemicals react dangerously on release into the atmosphere, especially in damp or foggy conditions.

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| Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Where hazardous or potentially hazardous substances may be present, the individual must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ensure that they do not put themselves or others at risk;○ Avoid exposure as far as possible; and○ If exposure is unavoidable, ensure any exposure is kept to an absolute minimum.● Best practice in terms of limiting any exposure is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Minimum time;○ Maximum distance; and○ Maximum shielding. |
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Plans and Guidelines

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| Contingency Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Contingency plans are specific arrangements to deal with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A particular type of incident; or○ An incident at a particular location.● These take the form of contingency plans, or operational plans.● Contingency Planning in Operational Support must be consulted in the event of an incident involving hazardous substances.● Other organisations can provide specialist advice and assistance and have planning arrangements to deal with incidents. |
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| Health and Safety Guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hazardous substances are used by staff at various locations across West Yorkshire Police.● Such use falls within the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).● Health and safety guidelines are held at each district administration unit and must be referred to if further information is required. |
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Chemical Suicide

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| Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The following are tell tale signs when dealing with a chemical suicide.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Warning note taped to vehicle or house/building windows;○ Windows taped to ensure airtight integrity;○ Vehicle driver appears unconscious; |
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- No hosepipe from exhaust into cabin;
 - Suspicious (possibly spilled or empty) containers seen inside the vehicle;
 - Smell of rotten eggs or sewage in the air no matter how weak; and/or
 - People in the vicinity experiencing breathing difficulties.
 - Call takers must follow the below procedure when dealing with chemical suicides:
 - Advise caller to step back away from the location, facing the vehicle with their backs to the wind. (Think Toxic or Noxious fumes).
 - Advise caller "**Do not enter or attempt a rescue!**".
 - Create Log with location and title the Log "Chemical Suicide" send to FSUP first, and to District as Emergency.
 - Have a colleague ring Ambulance and Fire Service Quoting "Chemical Suicide".
 - VRM of vehicle if possible (Only if safe to do so, keeping backs to the wind).
 - Ensure caller keeps a cordon of around 100m from the vehicle until Emergency Personnel arrive.
 - For any suspected CBRN incident, the Duty CBRN TAC Advisor should be contacted via telephone for Guidance and advice.
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Responsibilities

District Commanders

Responsibilities

- Where information comes to the notice of the police that hazardous substances are held at premises, the district commander for that area must ensure that details of the hazard are recorded:
 - With any key holder; and
 - On any alarm scheme information held by the Force.
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Officers

On Approach

- If an individual has to deal with any incident involving hazardous substances, they must:
- Before making any approach, consider the dangers involved;
 - Immediately inform Force Communications of the presence, or suspected presence, of any hazardous substances;

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- Request the Fire and Rescue and Ambulance services to attend;
 - Where the name of the hazardous substance is known:
 - Obtain from the CHEMDATA system (accessible at police and fire control rooms) essential emergency response and safety information; and
 - **Not** enter the incident area. This must be done by personnel from the Fire Service, unless fully trained and in possession of the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the hazard presented; and
 - where the name of the hazardous substance is not known:
 - **Not** enter the incident area. This must be done by personnel from the Fire Service, unless fully trained and in possession of the correct PPE appropriate to the hazard presented.
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At Scene

At the scene, the individual must:

- Establish command and control of the incident in accordance with procedures outlined in APP – Civil Emergencies;
- Initiate procedures in respect of any specific contingency plan that is relevant to the circumstances of the incident;
- Define, establish and control an inner cordon in liaison with the Fire and Rescue Service;
- Take precautionary measures;
- Approach from upwind whenever possible;
- Not enter the incident area unaccompanied;
- Where the presence of explosive gases is suspected; not:
 - Use radios;
 - Use mobile phones; or
 - Risk any electrical spark;
- Request specialist advice and assistance, if required;
- Inform the appropriate highway or water authority if a spillage is involved; and
- Not handle any material.

Note – the individual may not be able to detect the presence of hazardous substances without the aid of monitoring instruments. Where containers involved are small, information regarding the substances may not be on the containers or easily visible.

For further information about hazardous substances, contact:

- Contingency Planning during office hours; or
 - The Force duty officer.
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Environmental

If an individual is dealing with any incident that may have an adverse effect

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- Considerations** on the environment, they must:
- Where possible, contain any spillage but action to preserve life and health must take precedence;
 - If pollutants have already entered a water system, still be able to take controlling or mitigating action downstream;
 - Contact other agencies capable of implementing controls for environmental pollutants including:
 - The Environment Agency;
 - Fire and Rescue Service; and
 - Local authority.

Prompt action in requesting notification to or assistance from these agencies will help to prevent, or reduce, the effects of pollution and damage to the environment.

Note – action taken in the first 30 minutes is often crucial.

- Decontamination**
- Before leaving the scene, the individual must check that they are not contaminated.
 - If they need decontaminating, this must be done in accordance with specialist advice.
 - Facilities may be available from:
 - Fire and Rescue Service;
 - Area health authority;
 - Ambulance service; or
 - Military.
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Effect Monitoring

- Health Monitoring**
- Health monitoring must be instituted in respect of any member of staff who may have been contaminated by, or come into contact with, any hazardous substance.
 - The individual must inform Occupational Health and seek their assistance in these circumstances.
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- Environmental Monitoring**
- Environmental monitoring may be carried out by:
 - The Environment Agency;
 - The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA);
 - The Food Standards Agency;
 - The Health Protection Agency; and/or
 - Others depending on the nature of the hazardous substance.

Post Incident Investigations

Principles

- The Force may investigate incidents involving hazardous substances, but other agencies have an investigative and enforcement role and they must be notified accordingly.
 - For example, an incident involving the carriage of dangerous goods by road could be classed as a dangerous occurrence under RIDDOR and as such must be reported to the HSE which has the authority for enforcing these regulations.
 - If the officer in case (OIC) is investigating an incident involving hazardous substances being conveyed by road, they must, where offences are suspected, seek the assistance of a suitably trained roads policing officer or an HSE inspector.
 - If a prohibition is issued, the trained roads policing officer will notify the HSE.
 - All record sheets and prohibitions are held in the public files in the Roads Policing office at Carr Gate. Records are collated nationally by the secretary for the National Dangerous Goods Practitioners Forum.
 - A designated roads policing officer is responsible for forwarding the information to the forum, on behalf of the chief inspector – Roads Policing (Operational Support), who is the liaison officer in West Yorkshire Police.
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Additional Information

Compliance This policy complies with the following legislation, policy and guidance:

- APP – Civil Emergencies
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations (NIHHS)

Supporting Information The supporting information for this policy can be accessed.

Further Information Further guidance in relation to this policy can be sought from:

- The CBRN unit intranet page.
