

PROTOCOL
for Suspicious Substance Incidents

July 2011

Initial Response

First step is to contact Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), local law enforcement, and local fire department. Local first responder will then conduct a threat assessment using the State of Maine Standard Suspicious Substance Screening Tool form. This should be done jointly by the local law enforcement and fire department.

1. Is the suspicious substance loose _____ (if Yes, skip to #7) or contained in a package or associated with a package? _____ (if Yes answer A, B, C, D)

a. Is the package from a known source? Yes _____ No _____

b. Where was the package first received? _____ Where is it now? _____

c. Has the package been received via: US Mail? _____ UPS? _____ Fed Ex? _____
Messenger? _____ Inter-office? _____ Unknown? _____

d. If placed, has it been disturbed? Yes _____ No _____

2. Has anyone who had contact experienced any ill effects? Yes _____ No _____

If so, what ill effects and how long after exposure were they experienced?

3. If a package, is there a return address _____

4. Is there a threat or implied threat? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what is the exact wording or nature of the threat? _____

5. Have any threats been received prior this incident? Yes _____ No _____

a. Is a known biological, chemical or radiological threat present in the area?

Y N

b. Is the sample/scenario consistent with that threat?

Y N

c. Has a threat been made against any organization to which the affected party is a member? Employee?

Y N

d. Is there any credible reason the affected party would be threatened?

Y N

(e.g., political or high profile figure, CEO....)

e. Have there been recent "white powder" incidents locally?

Y N

6. Are there any existing conditions, which may have initiated this type of activity?
(Domestic or labor disputes, Community action, sensitive research, etc.)

7. If known, is the substance: dust ____ powder ____ stained ____ liquid ____
discolored ____ residue ____ solid material ____ other ____ unknown ____

8. Did anyone report an unusual odor or smell? Yes ____ No ____ **DO NOT SMELL!!**

9. Who has had contact with the suspicious substance? Names _____

10. When was the first contact (time) made with the suspicious substance _____

by whom? _____

11. Has the package been opened? Yes ____ No ____ **IF UNOPENED, DO NOT OPEN**

If yes what are the contents? _____

Are they the expected contents? Yes ____ No ____

12. What is the postage date if any? _____

13. Is the exposed area secured? Yes ____ No ____

- If after completing the threat assessment it is determined that there is no health hazard, and no further action is needed, case is closed unless law enforcement feels a criminal act has taken place.
- If the presumed threat came via US Postal Service, responders should contact the **US Postal Inspection Service** at **1-877-876-2455** (select option # 2)
- If the threat assessment indicates a potential public health concern, contact the MEMA Duty Officer (phone **1-800-452-8735** or pager **207-851-8898**)
- MEMA will contact the appropriate Regional Response Team (RRT) and Maine DEP hazardous materials response team and request a "Go Team" be sent to the incident scene to conduct additional surveys.

Notifications

The MEMA Duty Officer may contact the following:

- MEMA Director: **800-452-8735**
- County EMA (if for some reason notification of incident came by other means)
- Maine National Guard 11th WMD Civil Support Team: **207-441-4109**
- Maine DEP: **800-452-4664**
- Maine CDC: **800-821-5821**
- Maine Fusion Center: **877-786-3636**
- Poison Control Center: **800-222-1222**
- US Postal Inspection Service: **877-876-2455** (Option #2) (if USPS issue)

Incident Response

The RRT and DEP will communicate and send an advance team or “Go Team” (2 to 4 people) to the incident scene to conduct monitoring and perform field analysis of the substance.

The Advance team will monitor for the following and tests will be conducted based on the threat assessment and circumstances:

- Oxygen/Air Quality: to assess what level of PPE may be necessary
- Radiological: assure none exists
- UEL/Flammability: to assess danger of combustion
- Protein: Bio check 20/20 kit

If the results of field testing are negative the scene can be shut down by the Incident Commander or turned over to a law enforcement agency for further investigation as warranted.

If there are positive signs of a public health concern, the State of Maine standard protocols for sampling and evidence collection will be followed.

- See: *State of Maine Sampling Standard Operating Guidance*

Samples will be taken to the State Health Environmental Testing Lab (HETL) after a control number has been issued by the Department of Public Safety Emergency Communications Bureau in Augusta.

- To obtain a DPS Control Number: **800-452-4664**
- Transport should be coordinated by the Incident Commander at the scene.

Post Response

The HETL will contact the MEMA Duty Officer with the results of any testing.

The MEMA Duty Officer will contact the following:

- MEMA Director
- County EMA
- MeNG 11th CST
- Maine DEP
- Maine CDC
- Maine Fusion Center
- Poison Control Center
- US Postal Inspection Service (1-877-876-2455 option # 2) (if USPS issue)

MEMA will notify the local response agencies and the individual involved.

In the event that a sample has been transported an After Action Report (AAR) should be conducted, noting any improvements that may be made for future response to incidents. The AAR should be forwarded to the MEMA Director and County EMA.