

Fact Sheet

- **Hazardous Materials First Responder Awareness (FRA)**
- **Hazardous Materials First Responder Operational (FRO)**
- **Hazardous Materials Decontamination**
- **Hazardous Materials Team Medical Support**



Hazardous Materials classes include offerings specified by regulations as well as a variety that can be designed or customized for each client's situation and needs. Wherever regulations apply, they are strictly adhered to, and course completion certificates document compliance.

Regulations specify that "training shall be based on the duties and function to be performed by each responder of an emergency response organization". Because the duties, functions and, protective equipment available to fire service, ambulance, hospital and other personnel often vary widely, we believe their training should differ as well. Unlike many trainers, we adapt courses to the particular groups being taught. Where a client owns its own equipment we recommend training with that, or similar, equipment for maximum effectiveness and benefit.

Classes include practical exercises, when possible in the type of location where the students will be expected to perform. When the client's hazardous materials response plan is available, faculty will review it and tailor training and exercises to that plan.

Faculty are highly qualified and experienced in the hazmat subject, and include instructors certified up to the 160-hour technician level. Our team has experience training field, hospital, public health and other disciplines, using methods that are relevant to each type of student.

First Responder Awareness (FRA) 4 hours minimum

FRA training is required for those required only to recognize a possible hazmat release and notify the proper authorities. They are to take no further action. By regulation, content must include:

- Understanding of what hazardous substances are and the risks in an incident
- Potential outcomes of a hazardous substance emergency
- Recognition of a hazardous substance in an emergency
- Ability to identify hazardous substances, if possible
- The FRA's role in the employer's plan
- Use of the DOT Emergency Response Guidebook
- Ability to realize the need for additional resources, and to make appropriate notifications to the communication center.

First Responder Operational (FRO) 8 hours required; more available depending on roles

Regulatory requirements are commonly misunderstood or assumed by some to require 16 to 24 hours of training at the FRO level for all personnel. This is not now, and has never been, a requirement of federal or California regulations. Over the past 15 years we have successfully trained many FRO students in eight hours, making this level of training as attainable as the lower FRO level, while achieving higher levels of staff competence, safety and regulatory compliance.

FRO training is required for “individuals who respond to releases or potential releases as part of the initial response to the site for the purpose of protecting nearby persons, property, or the environment. They are trained to respond in a defensive fashion without actually trying to stop the release. Their function includes preventing exposures.”

We recommend FRO as the minimum training for all public safety personnel. Because of the ever-present risk of a spontaneously reporting contaminated patient, we also recommend this level for select hospital ED and support personnel. FRO training also provides a sound basis for many WMD preparedness, response, casualty care and decontamination courses.

FRO content must include all FRA content plus:

- Knowledge of basic hazard and risk assessment techniques
- Selection and use of proper personal protective equipment available at the FRO level
- Understanding of basic hazmat terms
- Performance of basic control, containment, and/or confinement operations and rescue of injured or contaminated persons within the capabilities of resources and PPE available
- Implementation of basic equipment, victim, and rescuer decontamination procedures
- Relevant standard operating procedures and termination procedures

Patient and Victim Decontamination (Variable hours, depending on client’s needs)

Courses may be tailored for field, hospital, mass casualty and other settings. They include selection of decon teams and their PPE, decontamination of ambulatory and incapacitated subjects, emergency decon, improvised decontamination systems, waste product considerations and other subjects.

Medical Support for Hazmat Teams (Variable hours, depending on client’s needs)

Hazardous materials entry teams are at significant risk from many factors, even though toxic exposure is rare with proper use of modern personal protective equipment and procedures. Teams are subject to extreme heat stress, fatigue, acute dehydration, slips, trips, falls and other injuries. Teams must often rely on local EMS personnel to provide pre- and post-entry medical evaluations and care for a variety of response complications.

These courses, ranging from 60 minutes to a day, provide a basic understanding in preventive and emergency care for those engaged in hazardous entry operations. Other topics may include:

- Regulatory considerations
- Special equipment necessary for team medical support
- Environmental hazards of various PPE levels
- The EMS/Hazmat Team interface

For more information on regulatory requirements for hazardous materials training, see the document “Highlights of ‘Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response’ for Emergency Services” on our website or refer to the Code of Federal Regulations 29 CFR 1910.120 and in California, to Title 8, California Code of Regulations Section 5192(q).