

**Adams and Jefferson County Hazardous Response Authority
FIELD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTION PLANS

F.O.G. #: 1805

**CATEGORY: Decontamination Annex For
Clandestine Labs**

DATE: November 1, 2022

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I. Purpose:

- A. The purpose of this annex is to provide basic guidance to the Adams and Jefferson County Hazardous Materials Officers and the Drug Task Force Supervisors regarding decontamination of individuals involved with clandestine drug labs. Clandestine labs, and more specifically meth labs and the contamination they cause, have become a serious problem which implicates significant health concerns. This annex is designed to protect the emergency responders, the affected persons and the public from contamination, while at the same time respecting the civil rights of individuals.

II. Guideline:

A. BACKGROUND

1. Clandestine drug labs have been and will continue to be a major response issue for police departments, fire departments and EMS workers. In the past several years, partnerships have been developed between various law enforcement agencies, fire agencies and health departments to handle the increasing numbers of clandestine drug labs that are being reported and discovered.
2. The complexities involved with the response to clandestine drug labs can be overwhelming to single response organizations. The following protocols will ensure that all public employees involved with the clandestine drug lab response are clear as to their role in the decontamination process and the procedures to be followed as it relates to decontamination.

B. PROTOCOLS

1. The Adams and Jefferson County Hazardous Materials Team may respond to incidents relating to meth labs at the discretion of the on-call HazMat Officer.
2. The HazMat Officer from the Adams and Jefferson County Hazardous Materials Team will consult with the Task Force Supervisor to determine the need for the team and determine what if any additional personnel will be required.
3. The HazMat Officer will consult with the on-scene Drug Task Force Supervisor regarding whether some form of decontamination is necessary. The following are guidelines regarding the circumstances under which an individual should be decontaminated. The HazMat Officer and Task Force Supervisor have the ability to modify these protocols on a case-by-case basis.

4. In Custody

- a) The decontamination process described below, in paragraph 2) i) is recommended for adult individuals taken into custody who:
 - 1) The HazMat Officer or Task Force Supervisor has received intelligence indicating that the arrest location was recently used as a drug laboratory as defined by C.R.S. 25-18.5-101 except for the following provisions of the definition, or
 - 2) If the individual appears to have come into contact with a chemical product, a drug laboratory, as defined by C.R.S. 25-18.5-101, except for the following provisions of the definition:
 - i) Engage in complete decontamination of the individual, including Removal of the individual's clothing, washing of the individual's hair and all skin areas with water and soap solution and rinsing with water. Place individual in appropriate garment or uncontaminated clothing and turn over to law enforcement. *(The Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) should be told to inform jail personnel of the circumstances of the arrest and the decon measures taken.)*
 - ii) If a representative of law enforcement requests that the individuals clothing be removed for seizure, that request will be honored. The clothing will be sealed in a plastic bag and will be immediately turned over to the requesting LEO noting that it has not been decontaminated.
 - 3) If small children are present and in need of decontamination, the North Metro Fire Rescue Decon Trailer will be requested via Broomfield Dispatch per the established protocols. Upon arrival of the trailer the children will be completely decontaminated by removing outer clothing. The children will be bathed or showered and provided clean outer garments. A minimum of two decon trained personnel will be present during the decontamination of minors. The children will be returned to law enforcement for appropriate disposition. An attempt should be made to obtain parental consent for decontamination of children. However, if there is no parental consent, the final decision will be made by law enforcement personnel and the HazMat Officer based upon safety and health considerations.
- b) Not In Custody
 - 1) Persons who are not in custody, but whom are deemed to be contaminated or potentially contaminated will be handled as follows:
 - i) The HazMat Officer or medical officers will explain to the person about contamination and potential adverse consequences of not being decontaminated.

- ii) The individuals will be offered decontamination services with the understanding that the decontamination is voluntary.
- iii) Should the individual agree to be decontaminated, the individual may be asked to agree to have his/her clothing seized. If the individual refuses to allow his/her clothing to be seized, the individual will be released with his/her clothing in a sealed plastic bag with instructions to properly launder their clothing and to watch for signs and symptoms of contamination.
- iv) If the individual refuses decontamination the HazMat Officer or medical officer will explain the potential ramifications in terms of medical consequences, of the refusal. The individual will then be asked to sign a standard refusal form and he/she will be referred to their medical provider for further information and follow-up.

C. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. The HazMat Officer will ensure that these protocols are followed and practiced by all team members.
2. HazMat Officers are authorized to modify decontamination protocols at their discretion when special circumstances or the safety of the individual dictates a change in protocol.
 - a) If the HazMat Officer authorizes a deviation from these protocols, he or she must document the reasons for the deviation in a written report to the team coordinator no later than 10 days following the event. The Team Coordinator shall then forward the report to the Board of Directors for review and file the original with the HazMat Officer's official report of the incident.
3. Should decontamination of any individuals be necessary, the North Metro Fire Rescue Decon Trailer may be requested by the HazMat Officer, via Broomfield Dispatch following the established protocols. The trailer may be used to decontaminate persons involved in a clandestine lab when it is available. Specific guidelines for trailer use have been developed by the North Metro Fire Department. If the trailer is not available then the Adams and Jeffco Hazmat Authority decon tents may be utilized. In all cases equipment utilization will be at the discretion of the AJCHRA HazMat Officer.
4. HazMat Officers have the ultimate responsibility to determine the need for and types of decontamination required and are expected to respond in a reasonable and appropriate fashion. HazMat Officers and team personnel should keep in mind that an individual that has not been taken into custody is not required to be decontaminated unless that individual's contamination poses an **imminent and articulatable risk to the public**.
5. Safety is paramount and as such, splash protection and respiratory protection should be worn while handling decontamination duties. In many cases suspects have substantial chemical residue and frequently are infected with blood borne pathogens.

6. If a suspect has warrants, a violent history or demonstrates aggressive behavior the decontamination procedure may be completed while the suspect is handcuffed. The HazMat Officer has the discretion to request, through law enforcement, that a particular individual remain restrained or be un-restrained for the purposes of effective decontamination.
7. Reasonable efforts will be made by the HazMat Officer and Decon team to provide shielding and/or privacy for those individuals being decontaminated.
8. A minimum of two decontamination trained personnel will perform decontamination procedures, generally under the supervision of a decontamination officer. Decontamination personnel will be of the same gender of the individuals being decontaminated whenever practical.
9. Any individual who will be transported via ambulance or intend to avail themselves of other government services will be evaluated by the HazMat Officer and, if deemed to pose an imminent and articulatable risk to the public, will be appropriately decontaminated prior to being released from the scene.

III. References:

- A. Reference 1
- B. Reference 2