



## **Emergency Procedure: Terrorism/Biological Attack**

### **Infection Control – Bioterrorism & Disaster Preparedness**

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#### **Policy Statement**

This facility has completed training exercises in preparation for a biological attack. The following procedures will be utilized in response to such an event.

#### **General Guidelines**

1. Biological agents are organisms or toxins that can kill or incapacitate people, livestock, and crops.
2. The three basic groups of biological agents that would likely be used as weapons are bacteria, viruses, and toxins.
3. Most biological agents are difficult to grow and maintain. Many break down quickly when exposed to sunlight and other environmental factors, while others, such as anthrax spores, are long-lived.
4. Biological agents can be dispersed by spraying them into the air, by infecting animals that carry the disease to humans, and by contaminating food and water. Delivery methods include:
  - a. Aerosols – Biological agents are dispersed into the air, forming a fine mist that may drift for miles. Inhaling the agent may cause disease in people or animals.
  - b. Animals – Some diseases are spread by insects and animals, such as fleas, mice, flies, mosquitoes, and livestock.
  - c. Food and water contamination – Some pathogenic organisms and toxins may persist in food and water supplies. Most microbes can be killed, and toxins deactivated, by cooking food and boiling water. Most microbes are killed by boiling water for one minute, but some require longer. Follow official instructions.
  - d. Person-to-person spread of a few infectious agents is also possible. Humans have been the source of infection for smallpox, plague, and the Lassa viruses.
5. Children and older adults are particularly vulnerable to biological agents.

#### **Planning Considerations for Biological Attack**

1. Determine the type and level of filtration in the facility and the level of protection it provides against biological agents.
2. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) provides technical guidance on this topic in their publication *Guidance for Filtration and Air-Cleaning Systems to Protect Building Environments from Airborne Chemical, Biological, or Radiological Attacks*. To obtain a copy, call 1 (800) 35NIOSH or visit the National Institute

for Occupational Safety and Health Web site, <http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/>, and request or download NIOSH Publication 2003-136.

3. Consider installing a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your furnace return duct. These filters remove particles in the 0.3 to 10 micron range and will filter out most biological agents that may enter the facility.
4. HEPA filters are useful in some biological attacks. HEPA filters do not filter chemical agents.
5. If you have a central heating and cooling system with a HEPA filter, leave it on if it is running or turn the fan on if it is not running. Moving the air in the facility through the filter helps to remove the agents from the air.
6. If you do not have a central heating or cooling system, a stand-alone portable HEPA filter can be used.
7. If you have a portable HEPA filter, take it with you to the internal room where you are seeking shelter and turn it on.
8. If you are in a facility that has a modern, central heating and cooling system, the system's filtration should provide a relatively safe level of protection from outside biological contaminants.

#### **Emergency Procedure – Terrorism/Biological Attack**

9. The basic public health procedures and medical protocols for handling exposure to biological agents are the same as for any infectious disease.
10. Individuals who find or become aware of an unusual and suspicious substance or package should notify the Administrator or highest ranking individual in the facility and follow the Suspicious Package Protocol below):
  - a. The first evidence of an attack may be when symptoms of the disease caused by exposure to an agent appear.
  - b. Be suspicious of any symptoms you notice, but do not assume that any illness is a result of the attack.
  - c. Use common sense and practice standard precautions.
11. Notify the Administrator, Director of Maintenance and Director of Nursing if a biological attack has occurred, if they are not aware or on the premises.
12. Activate the Recall Roster if warranted.
13. Activate the Incident Command System (ICS). The most qualified staff member (with respect to the Incident Command System) on duty at the time assumes the Incident Commander position.
14. Announce "CODE WHITE, a Biological Attack has occurred: Attention all staff members, residents, and visitors please remain in the facility until further notice."

15. Facility management staff report to the Incident Command Post for a briefing and instruction.
16. With suspicious envelopes and packages other than those that might contain explosives, take these additional steps against possible biological and chemical agents:
  - d. Contact 911 and Emergency Services immediately. Do not disturb the package.
  - e. Leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
  - f. Wash your hands with soap and water.
  - g. List all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give a copy of this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.
17. If exposure occurs with a biological agent:
  - h. Remove and bag clothes and personal items. Follow official instructions for disposal of contaminated items.
  - i. Wash with soap and water and put on clean clothes.
  - j. Seek medical assistance as soon as possible when it is announced by the local authorities where to go to receive medical care. You may be advised to stay away from others or even be quarantined.
18. Instruct staff members, residents, and visitors to remain in the facility until further notice from the local authorities.
19. Continue to listen for official instructions via radio, television, and emergency alert systems for further instructions.
20. Account for all staff members and residents.

### **After a Biological Attack**

21. The basic public health procedures and medical protocols for handling exposure to biological agents are the same as for any infectious disease.
22. Pay attention to official instructions via radio, television, and emergency alert systems.

### **Protocol for Suspicious Packages**

23. Be wary of suspicious packages and letters. They can contain explosives or chemical or biological agents.
24. Be particularly cautious in the mail handling area and refrain from eating or drinking in that area.
25. Characteristics that should trigger suspicion, include parcels that:
  - k. Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you.
  - l. Have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate.
  - m. Have protruding wires or aluminum foil, strange odors, or stains.
  - n. Show a city or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address.

- o. Are of unusual weight given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
  - p. Are marked with threatening language.
  - q. Have inappropriate or unusual labeling.
  - r. Have excessive postage or packaging material, such as masking tape and string.
  - s. Have misspellings of common words.
  - t. Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or otherwise outdated.
  - u. Have incorrect titles or titles without a name.
  - v. Are not addressed to a specific person.
  - w. Have handwritten or poorly typed addresses.
26. If suspicious envelopes and packages are found (other than those that might contain explosives), take these additional steps against possible biological and chemical agents:
- x. Notify the Administrator or highest ranking individual in the facility.
  - y. Contact 911 and Emergency Services immediately. Do not disturb the package.
  - z. Leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
  - aa. Wash your hands with soap and water.
  - bb. List all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give a copy of this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

### **Emergency Job Tasks – Terrorism/Biological Attack**

27. Administrator/Incident Commander
- cc. Contact 911 and Emergency Management Services if necessary.
  - dd. Upon arrival of authorities, establish contact with the officer in charge and relay all relevant information regarding the situation.
  - ee. Activate the ICS to manage the incident. The most qualified staff member (in regard to the Incident Command System) on duty at the time assumes the Incident Commander position. If severity of the incident warrants, then appoint other positions of the ICS structure.
  - ff. Instruct all staff members to remain in the facility.
  - gg. Listen for official instructions via radio, television, and emergency alert systems for further instructions.
  - hh. Ensure staff members and residents are accounted for and safe.
  - ii. Continuously remind all staff to remain calm and in control so as to not upset the residents.
28. Management Staff of All Departments
- jj. Report to the Incident Command Post.
  - kk. Instruct staff members to remain in the facility with windows and doors closed.
  - ll. Follow instructions if exposure occurs.
  - mm. Listen for official instructions via radio, television, and emergency alert systems for further instructions.
  - nn. Remain calm so as to not upset the residents.
  - oo. Assist the Incident Commander as needed.

- 29. Maintenance
  - pp. Report to the Incident Command Post.
  - qq. Instruct staff members to keep windows and doors closed.
  - rr. Follow instructions if exposure occurs.
  - ss. Listen for official instructions via radio, television, and emergency alert systems for further instructions.
  - tt. Remain calm so as to not upset the residents.
  - uu. Assist the Incident Commander as needed.
  
- 30. Staff Members of All Departments
  - vv. Keep windows and doors shut.
  - ww. Ensure residents and visitors remain in the facility until further notice from the local authorities.
  - xx. Follow procedures if exposure occurs.
  - yy. Remain calm to not upset the residents.
  - zz. Assist the Incident Commander as needed.

<b>References</b>	
<b>Other References</b>	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH">http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH</a>
<b>Related Documents</b>	Call-In of Off-Duty Personnel/Recall Roster
<b>Generations Revisions</b>	March 2020
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