

# Germantown Police Department

## Policies and Procedures

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**Number:** 8-8  
**Effective Date:** January 1, 2003  
**Subject:** Hazardous Materials  
**Previous Revisions:**

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### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for officers who respond to an incident and encounter hazardous materials.

### II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Germantown Police Department that all officers shall exercise extreme caution when responding to an incident where hazardous materials are encountered.

### III. PROCEDURE

#### A. General

Officers shall take the following actions when responding to incidents involving hazardous materials:

1. Seal off the area and call the Fire Department. The Fire Department will assume authority and responsibility for emergency procedures.
2. Identification of hazardous materials shall be attempted by reference to:

- a. Placards:

Placards are displayed at the front, rear, and on both sides of all railcars/vehicles hauling hazardous materials. Each patrol vehicle shall carry a departmental brochure identifying placards in use.

- b. Driver:

In case of explosives, the driver is required to have in his/her possession and be familiar with documents containing procedures to be followed in the event of accident or delay.

c. Shipping Papers:

- (1) Where the hazardous material is transported by truck, the driver is required to have a copy of the shipping papers, which show the name of the materials, classification, and quantity. By using these papers and the  
  
Emergency Response Guide, the officer can identify the hazard associated with the material and ways of handling it.
- (2) Where the hazardous materials are transported by rail, the shipping papers will be with the conductor and will have attached to them instructions for handling all hazardous materials on the train. Additionally, a manifest is located in the engine listing each car in the train, in order, from the engine back and the contents of each car. If the conductor is not available when emergency personnel arrive, officers shall locate him/her.

d. Chem-Cards:

To supplement the placarding system, many shippers of chemicals provide drivers with Chem-Cards, which provide emergency information. Although Chem-Cards are subject only to voluntary use, the officers shall ask the driver for them.

3. Approach the incident scene upwind, if possible. If radiological materials are involved, do not approach. Wait for Fire Department personnel or HAZMAT teams.

- a. Immediately notify dispatcher that you are on the scene of a possible hazardous materials incident. Provide the following minimum information about the incident:
  - (1) The exact location
  - (2) Type of vehicle involved
  - (3) Initial presence of hazardous material (placards, panels, etc.)
  - (4) Presence of fire, spilled liquids, or vapor leaks
  - (5) Known injuries
  - (6) Do not attempt to rescue injured or retrieve documentation until situation is assessed.

- b. Note the type of placards and numbers present. If possible, look for rectangular orange panels and note number. These numbers are UN/UA numbers and will aid in the identification of the contents.
- c. Carefully observe the incident before approaching. Be alert to signs of leakage such as sounds of escaping gas, evidence of liquid leak, odd smells, or vapor clouds.
- d. Whenever possible, approach the incident scene from the upwind side. Do not park in the potential path of leaking materials. **DO NOT DRIVE INTO VAPOR CLOUDS. REMEMBER, VEHICLES ARE AN IGNITION SOURCE.**
- e. Initially isolate the incident scene for a radius of 250 feet to allow room for response personnel. If cargo involved is on fire or fire is probable, evacuate to a radius of 500 feet to allow firefighters additional working clearance. Adjust distances as conditions warrant.
- f. **DO NOT USE FLARES** in the vicinity of the incident. Flammable vapors may be present.
- g. Prohibit traffic from passing through the incident. Do not allow bystanders to congregate around the incident.
- h. Note wind direction. Note if material is running into sewers, waterways, or ditches. If possible, estimate the quantity of material leaking. Pass this information to your dispatcher or responding fire units.
- i. When isolating an incident scene, give priority to removing persons from oncoming smoke or vapor.
- j. Do not step in pools of liquid or any unfamiliar material. Avoid contact with any chemical material.
- k. Do not open trailers of hazardous cargo. Trailers may contain hazardous vapors or loose cargo, which may cause death or injury.

NOTE: Liquid oxygen may mix with asphalt to create a highly shock sensitive explosive. Do not contact liquid oxygen contaminated asphalt under any circumstances; it may detonate even under foot. Completely isolate contaminated asphalt.

4. The on duty supervisor shall respond and ensure appropriate notifications are made.
5. The on duty supervisor will immediately notify the Chief of Police of the situation and will keep him advised of any changes.
6. Normal investigation procedures will be suspended until such time as appropriate clearance has been received.

B. Evacuation

State or local authorities will normally make evacuation decisions. However, in the absence of such authorities, an officer shall take appropriate emergency action, including evacuation.

**IV. REVIEW PROCESS**

An annual review of this policy shall be conducted to determine if it should be revised, cancelled or continued in its present form.

This order shall remain in effect until revoked or superseded by competent authority.