

**Policy Number: 403 – Hazardous Material Response**  
**Effective Date: September 3, 2020**  
**Revision Date: September 3, 2020**  
**Approved By: Denis Otterness, Chief of Police**

## **403.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Exposure to hazardous materials presents potential harm to members of the Montana State University Billings Police Department (Department) and the public. This policy outlines the responsibilities of members who respond to these events and the factors that should be considered while on-scene, including the reporting of exposures and supervisor responsibilities.

### **403.1.1 DEFINITIONS**

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Hazardous material** - A substance which, by its nature, containment, or reactivity, has the capability of inflicting harm during exposure; characterized as being toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, an irritant or strong sensitizer and thereby posing a threat to health when improperly managed.

## **403.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of this Department to respond to hazardous material emergencies with due regard for the safety of the public and those members responding to such incidents.

## **403.3 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE**

Department members may encounter situations involving suspected hazardous materials, such as at the scene of a traffic accident, chemical spill or fire. When members come into contact with a suspected hazardous material, they should take certain steps to protect themselves and other persons.

The Billings Fire Department is the agency trained and equipped to properly respond to and mitigate most incidents involving hazardous materials and biohazards.

Department members should not perform tasks or use equipment without proper training. A responder entering the area may require decontamination before s/he is allowed to leave the scene, and should be evaluated by appropriate technicians and emergency medical services

## **403.4 CONSIDERATIONS**

The following steps should be considered at any scene involving suspected hazardous materials:

1. Make the initial assessment of a potentially hazardous material from a safe distance.
2. Notify the City County Dispatch Center, appropriate supervisor(s) and the fire department.
3. Provide weather conditions, wind direction, a suggested safe approach route and any other information pertinent to responder safety.
4. Wear personal protective gear, being cognizant that some hazardous material can be inhaled.
5. Remain upwind, uphill and at a safe distance, maintaining awareness of weather and environmental conditions, until the material is identified and a process for handling has been determined.
6. Attempt to identify the type of hazardous material from a safe distance using optical aids (binoculars or spotting scopes) if they are available. Identification can be determined by:
  - a. Placards or use of an emergency response guidebook.
  - b. material.
  - c. Information obtained from any involved person with knowledge regarding the hazardous material. Information should include:
    - 1) The type of material.
    - 2) How to secure and contain the material.
    - 3) Any other information to protect the safety of those present, the community and the environment.
7. Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely and without contamination.
8. Make reasonable efforts to secure the scene to prevent access from unauthorized individuals and to protect and identify any evidence.
9. Begin evacuation of the immediate and surrounding areas, dependent on the material. Voluntary evacuation should be considered; mandatory evacuation may be necessary and will depend on the type of material.
10. Establish a decontamination area, as appropriate.
11. Activate Emergency Notification System, if applicable.
12. Notify the Montana Disaster and Emergency services.

## **403.5 REPORTING EXPOSURE**

Department members who believe they have been exposed to a hazardous material shall immediately report the exposure to a supervisor. Each exposure shall be documented by the member in an incident report that shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police, or their designee, as soon as practicable. Should the affected member be unable to document the exposure for any reason, it shall be the responsibility of the notified supervisor to complete the report.

Injury or illness caused or believed to be caused by exposure to hazardous materials shall be reported the same as any other on-duty injury or illness, in addition to a crime report or incident report as applicable.

**403.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

When a supervisor has been informed that a Department member has been exposed to a hazardous material, s/he shall ensure that immediate medical treatment is obtained and appropriate action is taken to mitigate the exposure or continued exposure.