

RECOMMENDED PROTOCOL
for Suspicious Substance Incidents

October 2009

Initial Response

First step is to contact the County EMA office, local law enforcement, and local fire department. Local first responder will then conduct a threat assessment using the State of Maine Standard Suspicious Substance Screening Tool form. This should be done jointly by the local law enforcement and fire department.

- If after completing the threat assessment it is determined that there is no health hazard, and no further action is needed, case is closed unless law enforcement feels a criminal act has taken place.
- If the presumed threat came via US Postal Service, responders should contact the *US Postal Inspection Service* at **1-877-876-2455** (select option # 5)
- If the threat assessment indicates a potential public health concern, the County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) will contact MEMA Duty Officer (pager **207-851-8898**)
- The County EMA will also contact the appropriate Regional Response Team (RRT) or Maine DEP hazardous materials response team and request a “Go Team” be sent to the incident scene to conduct additional surveys.

Notifications

The MEMA Duty Officer will contact the following:

- MEMA Director: **800-452-8735**
- County EMA (if for some reason notification of incident came by other means)
- Maine National Guard 11th WMD Civil Support Team: **207-441-4109**
- Maine DEP: **800-452-4664**
- Maine CDC: **800-821-5821**
- Maine Fusion Center: **877-786-3636**
- Poison Control Center: **800-222-1222**
- US Postal Inspection Service: **877-876-2455** (Option #5) (if USPS issue)

Incident Response

The RRT (or DEP) will send an advance team or “Go Team” (2 to 4 people) to the incident scene to conduct monitoring and perform field analysis of the substance.

If a RRT can not respond within a reasonable amount of time then DEP will send a responder to conduct monitoring and field analysis.

The following monitoring and field analysis tests should be conducted based on the threat assessment and circumstances:

- Oxygen/Air Quality: to assess what level of PPE may be necessary
- Radiological: assure none exists
- UEL/Flammability: to assess danger of combustion
- Protein: *Standard recommended type of test to be determined*

If the results of field testing are negative the scene can be shut down by the Incident Commander or turned over to a law enforcement agency for further investigation as warranted.

If there are positive signs of a public health concern, the State of Maine standard protocols for sampling and evidence collection will be followed.

- See: *State of Maine Sampling Standard Operating Guidance*

Samples will be taken to the State Health Environmental Testing Lab (HETL) after a control number has been issued by the Department of Public Safety Emergency Communications Bureau in Augusta.

- To obtain a DPS Control Number: **800-452-4664**
- Transport should be coordinated by the Incident Commander at the scene.

Post Response

The HETL will contact the MEMA Duty Officer with the results of any testing.

The MEMA Duty Officer will contact the following:

- MEMA Director
- County EMA
- MeNG 11th CST
- Maine DEP
- Maine CDC
- Maine Fusion Center
- Poison Control Center
- US Postal Inspection Service (1-**877-876-2455** option # 5) (if USPS issue)

The County EMA will notify the local response agencies and the individual involved.

In the event that a sample has been transported an After Action Report (AAR) should be conducted, noting any improvements that may be made for future response to incidents. The AAR should be forwarded to the MEMA Director and County EMA.