

Hazardous material events are very volatile and can be fatal to people in close proximity. Never wander onto a hazmat scene. Depending on the chemical, fire, or explosion, contamination can occur. Stay away from any potential haz-mat scene until an all clear is given by proper authorities. Chemical manufacturing plants are just one source of potential danger from hazardous materials. These toxic products are stored, used and transported daily throughout our communities. Occasionally accidents happen, and the effects of spills and leaks can be spread for miles through the air, sewer systems or waterways. Hazardous material accidents and releases can occur along roadways (from trucks carrying hazardous materials), railways (from trains carrying hazardous materials) or from industrial plants that use, manufacture or store hazardous materials. Some hazardous materials can be very harmful- even deadly- if humans are exposed to them, while others may pose little risk unless there is prolonged direct exposure and/or exposure to large quantities. Hazardous materials are around you every day- we routinely use them to clean our houses, treat our drinking water, paint our homes, fuel our cars and even cook our foods. They are used as the ingredients in consumer goods, industrial products and even some medicine.

Most hazardous materials spills and releases are attributed to incidents such as small gasoline/diesel spills and gas (natural or liquid propane) leaks. Typically, spills are stopped, cleaned up/evaporate and corrected with minimal exposure to humans and the environment. Occasionally, a larger spill or another hazardous material may require specialized equipment and specially trained personnel to correct the problem. Should such an incident occur traffic is usually re-routed and people may be asked to evacuate a certain area close to the spill/release or shelter in place until it can be contained and corrected.

If you see an accident or incident that may involve hazardous materials, please notify the emergency authorities at "911," or your local fire or police officials. Report briefly what you have seen and let authorities handle the situation from there. Do not approach a hazardous materials emergency scene! You may endanger your life and the lives of others.

For further information contact the Emergency Management Agency or call your local fire or police departments on their non-emergency numbers. The Local Emergency Planning Committee is a volunteer organization whose members have particular expertise or interest in hazardous materials and emergency services. The membership includes representatives from local fire, law enforcement and emergency service agencies; industry; business; state agencies; environmental and conservation groups; hospitals; academia; and the media.