

**Arizona Department of Public Safety
Arizona Department of Health Services
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Arizona Division of Emergency Management
March 2007
Management Guidelines for Responders of
Suspicious Powder Substances**

Supersedes all previous copies

Editorial Note: *The use of bold type indicates the item is a point of emphasis.*

OVERVIEW:

Operational Guidelines for the Management of Suspected Terrorism-Suspicious Powder Incidents:

The following guidelines have been recommended to ensure coordination of law enforcement response to terrorist threats or incidents. This information is intended to assist you in managing suspicious incidents and/or answering questions from the general public.

The local jurisdiction shall establish a **Unified Command System** and assume responsibility of the incident to include, where possible and appropriate fire, police, public health and public works. Public Health decision-making is an important role and will be made through the Unified Command System.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is the lead investigative agency on all **actual** bioterrorism incidents or credible threats and will respond to all incidents of this type. While the FBI has the lead investigative role, the first response will generally come from the local jurisdiction.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) will coordinate the deployment of state assets to assist the FBI or local jurisdictions. This will include DPS specialized support and other state assets to include the National Guard (see Item 21 below).

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is the coordinating agency for public health emergency response in Arizona. In conjunction with the County Health Departments, this includes biological testing of suspicious material. If suspicious material warrants testing, material (letters, powders, etc.) must be processed for confirmation at the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory. Until further notice, no other laboratories in Arizona are authorized to conduct bioterrorism-related environmental testing. **All materials from suspected bioterrorism incidents must be handled as criminal evidence.** Materials delivered to the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory may be tested for one or more biological agents, as requested by law enforcement or as the need is otherwise determined.

ADHS, DPS, and FBI recommend against the use of commercial hand-held assays by first responders to evaluate and respond to an incident involving unknown powders suspected to be anthrax or other biological agents. Biological agent field test kits at this time are not sufficiently accurate for on-scene decision making in the field, due to both false negative and false positive results associated with field assays. To date, there have been no examples of biological exposure where decision-making cannot wait for the results of validated laboratory procedures.

PROTOCOL:

1. A suspicious item is identified. Contact the local emergency response system (911) to inform them of the incident and to request their response.

Initial Precautions

2. If a package is suspected to contain an explosive device, it will be handled and dealt with as one. Personnel trained in explosives ordinance will be required to respond to suspicious packages to evaluate and render them safe prior to examination by hazardous material trained technicians. Requests for DPS Bomb Technicians will be routed through the DPS Duty Office at 602-223-2212 on a 24/7 basis.
3. Upon notification of a **terrorist threat or incident**, the local **Unified Command** System having jurisdiction should respond following local protocols, contact the FBI and control access to the site.
4. Limit the number of persons exposed (limit handling) to the suspicious item. Do not directly handle, touch, smell, or otherwise closely inspect any suspicious powder or other unknown substance without donning proper personal protective equipment (see Item 9 below).

Conduct Threat Assessment

5. Confirm that there is a legitimate threat or a suspicious substance, on site, in the envelope or package by conducting a threat assessment. Not all reports of suspicious powdered substances will be legitimate threats. Appropriate response officials (local law enforcement, technical Haz-Mat, DPS, and/or FBI) are responsible for conducting a threat assessment and determining need for testing. Not all responses will require testing, and not all samples collected will be given priority.

testing status. Major considerations for high priority testing include a high profile target or venue, an associated threat, or known intelligence information. Medium to low priority may include a visible or unknown powder, unusual circumstances, and no logical explanation for events/circumstances. If requested by law enforcement, samples will be held without testing, pending further investigation. Testing will always be conducted, however, if a request is made by one or more of the following agencies: DPS, ADHS, FBI, local emergency responder, or a local health department.

Contact Health Department

6. The **Unified Command System**, which includes public health, is responsible for the health risk assessment and decision-making process for decontamination, testing and treatment. **Contact your county health department (see page 5) or the Arizona Department of Health Services (602-364-3289).** Note: Tribal entities should notify the county health department in which the incident occurred.

Obtain a Watch Log Entry (WLE) Number

7. The local agency should immediately notify the AZ DPS' Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC) at **602-644-5805** with information regarding the potential case. An ACTIC Watch Log Entry (WLE) Number will replace the previously issued FBI PX Numbers. If the local agency does not have the resources to respond, they should contact the DPS Duty Office (DO) at **602-223-2212** and ask for a hazardous materials response to a white powder incident, or the ACTIC Watch Center at **602-644-5805** for assistance. DPS will notify the FBI of all samples to be taken to the ADHS Public Health Laboratory. **All samples to be taken to the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory for testing must have and ACTIC WLE number assigned.** (ACTIC M-F 0800-2300 **602-644-5805**) (DO M-F 2300-0800 **602-223-2212**) S-S All Day. Contact the State Public Health Laboratory to communicate the estimated time of the sample(s) arrival.
8. If the FBI receives the call directly; the FBI will notify the ACTIC at **602-644-5805**. DPS will then notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency for first response and will issue a control number (WLE Number).
9. Use the appropriate level of personal protective equipment for emergency workers during containment and collection, as defined by Hazardous Materials technicians.
10. Currently, the ADHS Public Health Laboratory is operational during normal work hours (8:00am to 5:00pm), 7 days a week. After hours use the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory Managers Cell Number: 602-283-6277.

ADHS State Public Health Laboratory
250 N. 17th Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-1188
ADHS State Public Health Laboratory Managers Cell number: 602-283-6277

Sample Preparation and Transport

11. The suspicious item must be double bagged and placed in a sealed container such as a paint can or sealed protective hard package. Please use a sample container whose size to no larger than a five-gallon paint can to facilitate testing within the laboratory's biosafety cabinets. *All items collected are to be treated as evidence and must follow the Chain of Custody. Each item of evidence must have a completed DPS property and evidence form that lists the agency name and phone number, officer's name, victim, other parties involved and description of the evidence to be examined.*
12. The local law enforcement agency is responsible for arranging transport of the sample to the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory, which may involve DPS transport assistance. The ADHS State Public Health Laboratory requires a submittal form for each sample to be tested. These forms are available from the laboratory (a sample is attached). Ensure that the sample delivery is accompanied with a completed submittal form or at least all the required information so that it may be filled out upon arrival at the laboratory.
13. The submitting agency's contact information must be provided on the submittal form. The submitting agency is the agency that is handling the incident, requires laboratory notification of the results, and will provide notification of the results to all parties involved in the incident. To protect investigative integrity, the case officer of the submitting agency will be notified first before any other party.

ADHS State Public Health Laboratory Testing – Priority and Results

14. The ADHS State Public Health Laboratory analyzes all submitted samples that have ACTIC Watch Log Entry Number(s). Inform the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory of a sample(s) arrival time as early as possible in the process. Prioritization on testing of samples is based on the threat assessment. If necessary, DPS or FBI may determine testing priority and notify the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory.
15. The ADHS State Public Health Laboratory is responsible for developing and maintaining the testing methodology and priority algorithm (i.e., samples with low threat priority and containing no visible powder or suspicious substance, will receive lowest testing priority and the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory may not use rapid testing methodology). The laboratory will analyze high priority samples in a timely manner, sometimes involving after duty hours testing. If an agency obtains low priority evidence after duty hours, the agency should store the evidence in its agency evidence storage. An ACTIC Watch Log Entry Number will normally be issued during business hours. A call back number will be required so that the WLE number may be issued the next business day.

16. The ADHS State Public Health Laboratory will provide results to the submitting agency. The ADHS Bureau of Emergency Preparedness and Response will notify the respective county public health department of the results. The submitting agency must coordinate with the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory to ensure that samples are returned to their owners and to notify DPS. Samples will not be returned from the laboratory directly to individuals. Please contact the ADHS State Public Health Laboratory at **602-542-1188** to arrange for the release of evidence for pick-up, or for the destruction of evidence.

Public Health Considerations:

17. Collect the names and contact information of those exposed to the product on scene.
18. If someone simply opened a letter claiming to contain anthrax, **full decontamination may not be warranted**. Concerned "patients" should be instructed to thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water. If they touched their face or other body parts after examining the unknown product, they should wash that surface as well. The infection control practices and clean-up advice from public health officials would rarely involve full removal of clothing and personal items.
19. Public health through the **Unified Command System** is responsible for education of all exposed persons, put risks into perspective, and de-escalate the situation, if possible. In addition to appropriate infection control precautions (see Item Number 17 above), emphasis should be placed on public education directives such as incubation periods and sampling results time frame. If public health is not immediately available, the incident commander will ensure proper education is provided.
20. Health officials will evaluate the need for initiation of antibiotic prophylaxis. In almost all circumstances, **the decision to initiate prophylaxis can be delayed** until the presence or absence of biological agent is determined by laboratory testing. The decision on prophylaxis will be made by the Unified Command System, including public health officials.

For Hospitals

21. If a patient, who claims to have been exposed to a suspicious powder, is seen at an emergency department, please contact your local emergency response system (911) immediately. Extreme measures such as decontamination, **clinical** sample collections, prophylaxis, and/or **emergency room shut down** are not warranted (except for decontamination of **gross contamination**). Public health will coordinate with public safety agencies to ensure collection and testing of any remaining specimens. If the patient brings the material to the emergency department, then place the material in a sealed plastic bag and call your local law enforcement to collect the sample for threat assessment and transport. If the patient has discarded the material, or it is otherwise not available, then a further assessment of the risks should take place between the attending physician and the local public health representative.

Civil Support Team (CST) Activation and Response Protocol

22. If the Incident Commander requests the activation of the 91st CST, the CST can be activated through the local emergency response dispatch system.
23. If called, the CST will respond to requests for assistance, but will immediately notify the DPS Duty Officer. DPS may respond, in conjunction with the CST, if warranted.
24. If field testing is requested, CST will conduct all-hazards testing (chemical, biological and radiological). All samples will go to the ADHS Public Health Laboratory for confirmatory testing.
25. CST will collect samples only at the discretion of the on-scene Incident Commander. The Incident Commander will ensure the law enforcement chain-of-custody is maintained.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please call the ACTIC Watch Center at **602-644-5805** or **1-877-2SAVE AZ** or the Arizona Department of Health Services at **602-364-3289**. The Arizona Department of Health Services is responsible for the maintenance of these guidelines.

If you are interested in more information regarding terrorism, you may access the following web pages:

Centers for Disease Control Bio-terrorism Web Page <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>

Arizona Department of Health Services Bioterrorism Web Page <http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/edc/edrp/index.htm>

Arizona Division of Emergency Management Web Page <http://www.dem.state.az.us/>

Preliminary Findings on Hand-Held Assays Web Page <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/fsc/backissu/jan2003/frsu.htm>

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Bureau of State Laboratory Services
250 N. 17th Ave
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
Phone: (602) 542-1188
Fax: (602) 542-0760

LAB ID: _____ _____
FBI/ DPS: _____

EXAMPLE ONLY.
FORMS AVAILABLE AT THE ADHS STATE LABORATORY.

RECEIPT OF PROPERTY

SUBMITTING AGENCY	CASE ID	DATE RECEIVED
AGENCY STREET ADDRESS	AGENCY CITY	AGENCY PHONE NUMBER ()
CASE OFFICER (Please Print)	BADGE NUMBER	AGENCY FAX NUMBER ()
VICTIM INFORMATION Name	Address	Phone
DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: (Identifying Number, Quantity And Type)		

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

FROM NAME (PRINT)	SIGNATURE	PURPOSE	TO NAME	DATE / TIME
EXAMPLE ONLY				

RELEASE OR DESTRUCTION OF SPECIMEN(S)

We have finished testing your specimen(s). We are now able to return the specimen(s) to you. If you choose, we can destroy the specimen(s) for you. Please complete this form and return it to us in person by fax (602) 542-0760. If you request the return of the specimen(s), please call (602) 542-1188 to make the necessary arrangements.

Released specimens must be picked up in person and cannot be mailed.

CONTACT DATE:	NAME OF CONTACT:	REMARKS:
<input type="checkbox"/> RELEASE	DATE / TIME:	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:
<input type="checkbox"/> DESTROY	PRINT NAME:	
REMARKS:		

DISTRIBUTION: White – State Laboratory, Canary – Release, Pink – Data Entry, Golden Rod Submitter

Initial and date destroyed 4

Arizona County Public Health 24-Hour Numbers

(Please note: In some counties, the numbers listed are their Sheriff's Office dispatch numbers; please specify that contact is needed with public health)

Apache	928-337-4321 or (1-800-352-1850)
Cochise	1-800-423-7271
Coconino	928-913-6744
Gila	911
Graham	928-428-3141
Greenlee	928-865-4149
LaPaz	928-669-2281
Maricopa	602-747-7111
Mohave	928-718-4927
Navajo	928-524-4300
Pima	520-743-7987
Pinal	520-866-5111
Santa Cruz	520-761-7869
Yavapai	928-713-9424
Yuma	928-317-4624