

Everyday Hazardous Material Responses In Public Health

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Purpose

Many local health officials receive calls and complaints about the release of hazardous materials into the environment. The following are some hazardous material release scenarios and some helpful response actions that you can take to help the situation.

Definition

Hazardous Material – any item or chemical which can cause harm to people, plants, or animals when released by spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, emptying, discharging, injecting, escaping, leaching, dumping, or disposing into the environment.

On Friday afternoon the phone rings and
the person on the other line says...



“I don’t have heat in my
apartment because my oil
tank let go.”

During the inspection you find...



Response Actions

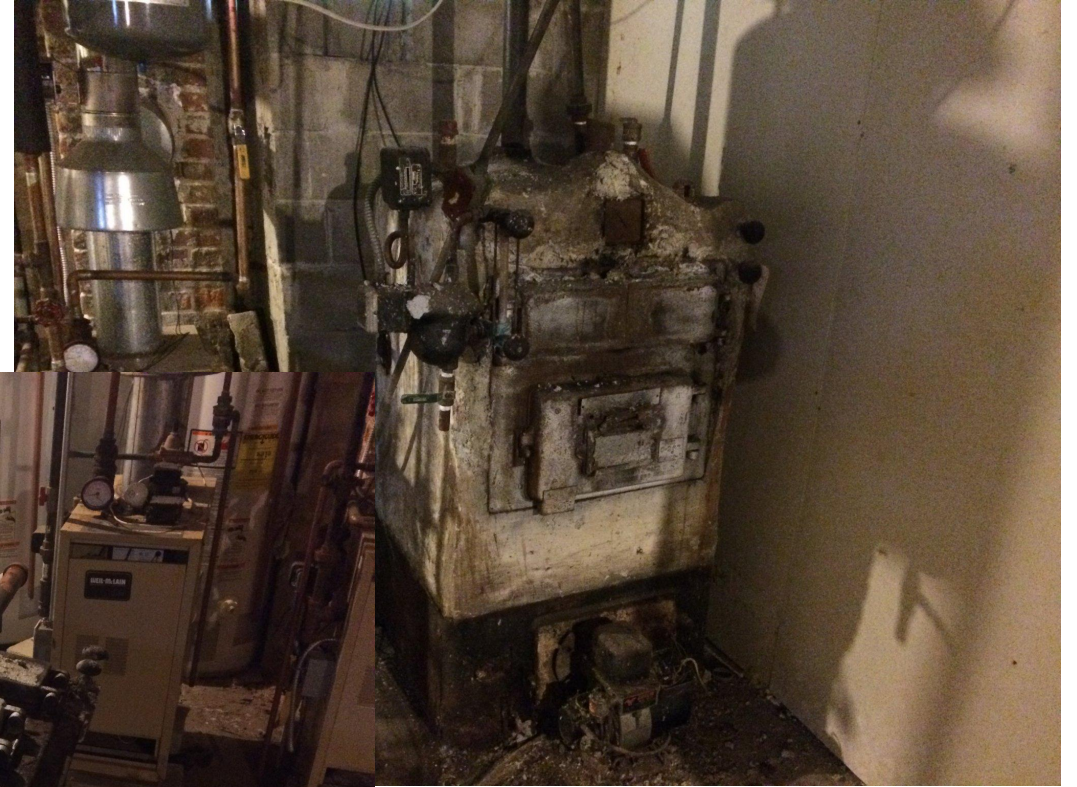
- ✓ Fire Department
 - Stop and contain the release
 - Indoor air quality concerns
- ✓ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (310 CMR 40.0311 - 10 gal. reportable release)
- ✓ Responsible Party/Property Owner
 - “The cleanup of the spill is the cheapest it will ever be, right now! The longer you wait the more expensive it gets.”
- ✓ Help facilitate the hiring of an emergency response company and Licensed Site Professional (LSP).
- ✓ Homeowner’s insurance company
- ✓ Utility impacts (usually through sump pumps)
- ✓ Nearby private well owners
- ✓ Public Water Supply/Conservation

At 3pm on Friday afternoon the phone rings and...



“Someone in my apartment building is causing a lot of dust. I think they are taking the coating off of an old boiler, so they can have it for scrap metal. It may be asbestos.”

During the inspection you find...



Response Actions

- ✓ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
 - 310 CMR 7.15 – Air Pollution - Asbestos
- ✓ Sample suspect material.
- ✓ Responsible party/property owner/occupants
- ✓ Certified Asbestos Inspector
- ✓ Minimum Standards of Human Habitation
 - 105 CMR 410.250
- ✓ Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards in businesses and schools



At 3pm on Friday afternoon the phone rings
and...



“My neighbor doesn’t live in
the house next to me and is
bringing chemicals in and
out during the day.”

During the inspection you find...



Response Actions

- ✓ Fire Department – Fire Prevention
 - Storage of hazardous materials
- ✓ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
 - Threat of spills or releases into the environment.
 - Industrial Wastewater - chemicals entering into the septic system.
- ✓ Building Department
 - Zoning Issues – Use of a residential structure for a business
- ✓ FDA – No approvals needed to sell – voluntary registration



At 3pm on Friday afternoon the phone rings
and...



“The Fire Department informs you that a worker in a local lab was taken to the hospital after a chemical caught fire in the lab.”

During the investigation you find...



Response Actions

- ✓ Fire Department – Fire Prevention
 - Chemical/Gas Storage
- ✓ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
 - Threat of Spills or Releases
- ✓ Lab's chemical clean-up company
- ✓ Industrial Hygienist – indoor air quality

At 3pm on Friday afternoon the phone rings
and...



“The Fire Department
informs you of an accident at
the local gas station. Fire
Fighting Foam released
impacting residents and
cars.”

During the investigation you find...



Response Actions

- ✓ Fire Department
- ✓ Residents' went to hospital - concern over exposure to FF Foam
- ✓ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
 - Threat of Spills or Releases
- ✓ DPW – foam entered catch basin – effluent to brook proximal to well field

At 3pm on Friday afternoon the phone rings
and...



“A resident called to
complain of a chemical smell
her basement.”

During the investigation you find...



Response Actions

- ✓ Navy and their consultants – responsible for investigation.
- ✓ EPA/DEP – forced further remedial efforts
- ✓ Navy undertaking a Time Critical Removal Action
- ✓ Health Dept – mitigating residents' concerns for their health and property value. Helped negotiate access to residence after stalemate. Answer questions from press.

An Ounce of Prevention...

- Household Hazardous Waste Events
- Universal Waste Collection
- Pre-Demo Policy
- Hazardous Materials Control Bylaw
- Biosafety Regulations



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