



Suspicious Substance Response and Sample Collection Procedures

The procedures contained within this document should be used as guidance for responding to an event involving suspicious substances which may pose a public health and safety threat. The user of this document and the accompanying collection materials shall be trained on the proper techniques of sample collection and the importance of maintaining chain-of-custody to ensure the integrity of the sample is not compromised. A response to a suspicious substance is a fluid situation and it is recognized that these procedures may need to be altered to fit the incident.

SCENE CONTROL AND PATIENT ASSESSMENT

1. If exposed are experiencing signs of a chemical exposure or a hazardous chemical or toxin is suspected, follow department's decontamination protocols as necessary. Instruct exposed to **wash face and hands**.
2. Isolate the area containing the suspicious substance and control any further release as appropriate.
3. Conduct an initial threat assessment and determine if additional resources need to be involved. If additional resources are warranted contact the **Minnesota State Duty Officer**: (651)-649-5451 or (800)-422-0798.
4. Perform a risk assessment in coordination with local law enforcement, public health and the FBI WMD Coordinator. Consider things such as the credibility of the threat, the amount of material and the potential for harm.
5. Contact the **Public Health Laboratory**: (612) 282-3723 or (612)-282-3750 directly, for testing of samples.
6. Begin completing the "[Emergency Sample Information and Chain-of-Custody Form](#)". This form will indicate additional information to gather about the incident.
7. Screen the suspicious substance for explosives and radiation at a minimum before collecting sample for the laboratory. Make every attempt to preserve an adequate amount of material for testing at the laboratory. Call for guidance.
8. Unpack the Unknown Sample Collection Kit. Remember to bring only the Hot Zone Pack into the contaminated area. Verify the kit contents (listed below):

COLD ZONE PACK

-*Suspicious Substance Response And Sample Collection Procedures* document

-*Emergency Sample Information and Chain of Custody Form*

-Paperwork bag

-Evidence tape

-Warm zone pack

-Hot zone pack

WARM ZONE PACK

-Absorbent material

HOT ZONE PACK

- (1) 125-ml Nalgene over pack container
- (1) 40-ml sterile clear glass collection vial
- (2) sterile scoopulas
- (1) permanent marker, Black
- (2) sterile transfer pipettes
- (1) sample collection sponge
- (2) 9"x12" sample over pack bags



HOT ZONE - SAMPLE COLLECTION

****Only bring the Hot zone pack into the hot zone****

BULK POWDERS, SOLIDS AND LIQUIDS

<p>1. Open Hot zone pack and remove materials.</p>	
<p>2. Using spatulas or pipettes collect material and place in glass jar.</p>	
<p>3. Fill jar with about 1 tablespoon of sample, if possible. If not possible, then fill jar with as much sample as possible.</p>	
<p>4. Seal jar and place inside the Nalgene® container. Secure the lid of the Nalgene® container.</p>	
<p>5. Place the Nalgene® container into a sample over pack bag, label bag with field number, seal and then place into the Hot zone bag. Seal the Hot zone bag.</p>	

****Note: Multiple over-packed samples may be combined in the Hot zone bag.****

HOT ZONE - SAMPLE COLLECTION

****Only bring the Hot zone pack into the hot zone****

COLLECTION OF LETTER OR OTHER "PRE-PACKAGED" SAMPLE

<p>1. Open Hot zone pack and remove materials.</p>	
<p>2. Place letter or package into the Hot zone bag.</p>	
<p>3. For spilled or leaking samples follow the "Bulk Powders, Solids and Liquids" collection steps above to collect residual material.</p>	
<p>4. If only trace amounts of material are available a swab sample may be collected following the "Swab Samples" protocol below.</p>	

****Note: Multiple over-packed samples may be combined in the Hot zone bag.****

HOT ZONE - SAMPLE COLLECTION

****Only bring the Hot zone pack into the hot zone****

SWAB SAMPLES (collected when only a trace amount of material is available)

<p>1. Remove "Swab Collection Kit"</p>	
<p>2. Open swab bag and remove pre-moistened swab by gently pushing on the sponge through the bag until the handle protrudes from the bag.</p>	
<p>3. Collect sample by wiping over surface of dispersed powder. Do not touch the swab below the thumb stop.</p>	
<p>4. Place swab back in collection bag. Pinch the sponge and break the handle from the sponge by bending the handle back and forth.</p>	
<p>5. Roll down the top of the sponge bag securing with wire tabs. Place into a sample over pack bag, label with field number, and seal. Place over pack bag into the Hot zone bag and seal.</p>	

****Note: Multiple over-packed samples may be combined in the Hot zone bag.****

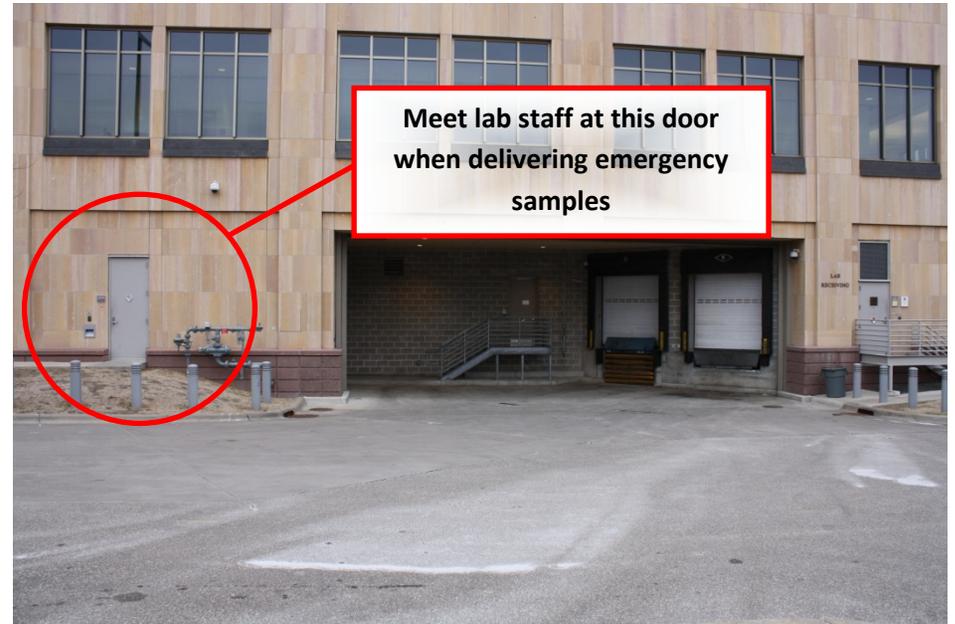
Warm Zone - Decontamination and Packaging

<p>1. Wipe the outside of Hot zone bag with fresh bleach solution (1 part bleach -9 parts water) or equivalent decontamination solution.</p>	
<p>2. Place Hot zone bag into Warm zone bag with absorbent material.</p>	

Cold Zone – Preparing Sample for Transport

<p>1. Seal Warm zone bag with custody tape and initial the custody seal ensuring signature is on both the bag and tape. Place Warm zone bag into the Cold zone bag.</p>	
<p>2. Complete the <i>Emergency Sample Information and Chain-of-Custody Form</i> and place in paperwork bag. Place paperwork in Cold zone bag with the Warm zone bag.</p>	
<p>3. Coordinate transport of sample with the laboratory on-call person (612-282-3750 or 612-282-3723).</p> <p>4. Relinquish custody of the sample to the transporter ensuring that each party signs the chain-of-custody.</p> <p>5. Transport to MDH Public Health Lab (address and directions below). Use WEST loading dock entrance. DO NOT ENTER LAB UNTIL SAMPLE HAS BEEN PRE-SCREENED BY LAB STAFF.</p> <p>6. Call MDH on-call phone upon arrival for sample receipt.</p>	

Driving directions 601 Robert Street North, St. Paul, MN 55155



From the north, heading south on 35E

- Take the University Avenue exit, exit number 107C, towards State Capitol
- Turn right on University Avenue
- Turn left onto Robert Street
- Turn right onto 12th St E
- Turn right onto Cedar St.
- Turn right onto Columbus Ave.
- Turn right onto Minnesota St.

From the south, heading north on 35E

- Take the 11th Street exit, exit number 106C
- Turn left onto Minnesota Street
- Turn left onto 12th St. E
- Turn right onto Columbus Ave.
- Turn right onto Minnesota St

From the east, heading west on 94

- Take the 12th Street exit, exit number 242A, towards State Capitol
- Merge onto 12th Street
- Turn right onto Cedar St.
- Turn right onto Columbus Ave.
- Turn right onto Minnesota St.

From the west, heading east on 94

- Take the Kellogg Ave. exit
- Turn right onto Kellogg Ave.
- Turn left onto John Ireland Blvd.
- Turn right onto Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
- Turn right onto Cedar St.
- Turn left onto Columbus Ave.
- Turn right onto Minnesota St.