

NEW SOUTH WALES FIRE BRIGADES OPERATIONS BULLETIN 2008/06



Sampling, packaging and labelling at suspicious substance incidents

Issue

In accordance with the [Multi agency procedure for suspicious substance incidents](#), at High Risk (**Red**) and Medium Risk (**Blue**) suspicious substance incidents, the NSWFB is responsible for providing the NSW Police Force Forensic Services Group with a sealed, labelled sample of the substance in a decontaminated container.

This Operations Bulletin gives the procedures for sampling, labelling and packaging the suspicious substance.

Suspicious substance kits

Suspicious substance kits have been issued to all pumpers. The kit contains:

- a 20 litre black plastic drum with screw lid
- a 500 ml bottle of household bleach
- a 2-litre pump spray bottle (for bleach solution)
- two 4-litre plastic sample containers with lids
- two pairs of Tyvek coveralls
- Chux® Superwipes
- four large zip-lock plastic bags (370 mm x 470 mm)
- a 500 ml bottle of 3M Avagard™ General Hand & Body Wash.

Procedure

1. Before entering the Hot Zone

- 1.1 Don appropriate personal protective equipment. The minimum requirement is level B protection: splash suit, self contained breathing apparatus, chemical boots and gloves.
- 1.2 Take the two sample containers from the suspicious substance kit: one for the sample, the other to hold a decontamination solution.
- 1.3 In the spare sample container, prepare a decontamination solution of 4 pump-squirts of 3M Avagard™ General Hand & Body Wash to approximately 2 litres of water.

2. Sampling

- 2.1 At Medium risk (**Blue**) suspicious substance incidents, place small objects or mail items that contain the substance directly into a zip-lock bag and then into the sample container. For larger items or spills, consult the Forensic Services Group for appropriate actions or sampling.

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2.2 At High risk (**Red**) suspicious substance incidents, consult the Forensic Services Group before taking a sample.



NOTE

Do not put samples in recovery bins unless specifically requested by the Forensic Services Group. Recovery bins do not fit in a laboratory fume cabinet.

2.3 Ensure the sample container is properly secured.

3. Decontaminating the sample container

3.1 Before leaving the Hot Zone, decontaminate the sample container with a Chux® Superwipe and liberal amounts of the soapy water decontamination solution.

3.2 Upon exiting the Hot Zone, decontaminate the sample container at the same time as the operator.

4. Labelling

4.1 In the Warm Zone, use a chinagraph pencil to label the sample container with the following information:

- date of call
- time of call
- address of incident
- NSWFB incident number
- brief description of the sample (colour, form, other characteristics).

4.2 Once labelled, put the sample container in a *clean*, dry, zip-lock plastic bag. The sample can now be taken out of the Warm Zone.

5. Handover

5.1 Record the details of the Police Officer taking custody of the sample, for entry into the *Description of Incident* field in the AIRS report later.

5.2 Give the sample to the Police Officer.

5.3 The Police are responsible for custody of any recovery bins containing suspicious substances or contaminated items.

5.4 The residual suspicious substance may constitute a crime scene.

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6. Further information

This Operations Bulletin should be used in conjunction with:

- [Operational guide for multi agency response to suspicious substance incidents](#)
- [Multi agency procedure for suspicious substance incidents](#)
- Standard Operational Guideline 10.15, [Chemical, biological and radiological incidents](#)
- Standard Operational Guideline 8.8, [Terrorism - biological agents](#)
- Standard Operational Guideline 10.8, [Biological hazards](#)
- Standard Operational Guideline 10.4, [Decontamination](#)

| Noted, Station Commander | A | B | C | D | Other |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------|
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| Contact Officer: | File Number: | Date: |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|
| A/Superintendent Darryl Dunbar A/Manager Hazardous Materials Response Unit Phone: 0419 264 647 | CHO/06238 CHO/08705 | 20 August 2008 |

Previous Operations Bulletin: 2008/05 Solar Electricity