

# Responder Safety



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#### Safety Awareness: Protect yourself while helping others!









## Disaster Related Hazards

- Physical
- Chemical
- Biological
- Radiation
- Thermal
- Noise
- Fatigue
- Lack of restrooms!





## How to Approach Worker Safety

- •Prevention is the key!
- Prevent exposure/illness/injury through the occupational health hierarchy of controls:
  - •Engineering controls
  - •Administrative controls
  - Personal protective equipment

## Employer Responsibilities



- State and local governments are responsible for worker health and safety including:
  - Allocating sufficient resources for safety and health programs
  - Training staff
  - Purchasing protective clothing and equipment as needed
  - Correcting unsafe or unsanitary conditions



## Responder Responsibilities

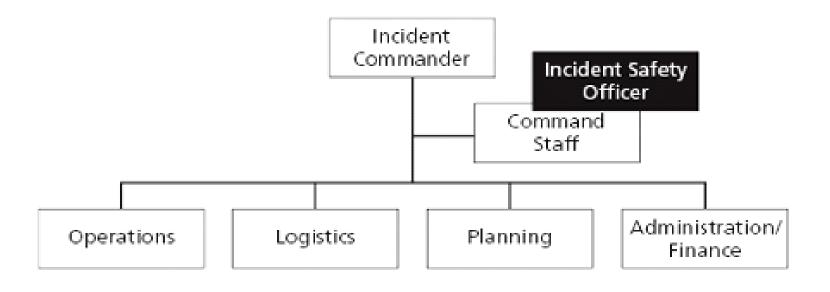
- Follow health and safety rules and use required PPE
- Follow safe work practices for your job
- Report hazardous conditions to your team leader/supervisor
- Protect your family at home from crosscontamination



## Safe Responses start with the Safety Officer



- Assures personnel safety and monitors hazardous and unsafe situations
- Safety Officer will not send you into hazardous areas
  - Fire still burning...
- Everyone is a Safety Officer!



## Safety Officer



- DOC Safety Officer
  - Tracking of all staff
  - Ensures areas are safe to access

#### • Field Safety Officer

- Reports to the DOC Safety Officer
- Maintain a health and safety plan
- Stops unsafe activities

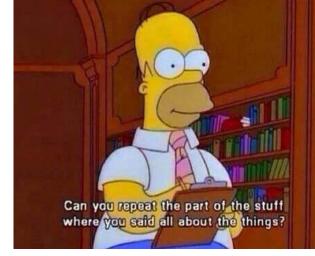
## Communications



- Text Message
- Cell Phones
- Email
- Landlines
- Satellite Phones
- •800 MHZ Radios



## Radio Communications



- Push to talk, pause, then speak.
- Speak a little slower than normal.
- Keep messages simple and to the point.
  - State "break" for longer messages
- Remember others can hear you conversation.

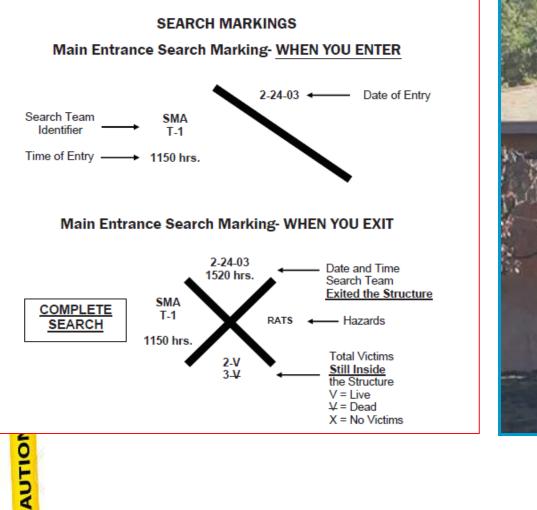
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## **Communications - USAR**







## Fatigue

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- Pace yourself
  - Take frequent rest breaks with water/snacks
  - Stay hydrated
  - Pay attention to those around you



## Structural Integrity



- Do not enter questionable structures until they are evaluated and rendered safe
- Conduct all necessary activities from outside damaged structures



## Unstable trees and fireplaces!





#### Debris Piles & Unstable Surfaces



- Only walk on surfaces you know are stable
- Watch for sharp edges, points & rebar!



## **Confined Spaces**

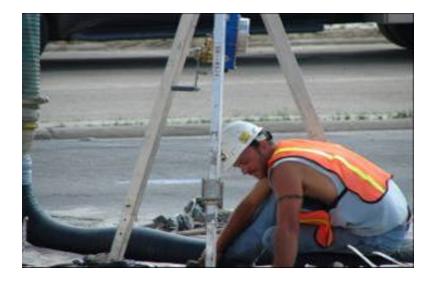
What is a confined space?

- Space with limited access
- Large enough for bodily entry
- Not designed for occupancy
- Example: sewers/storm drains

#### **Avoid confined spaces!**

What are the hazards?

- Oxygen deficiency
- Entrapment
- Hazardous atmosphere



## **Power Lines**



- Treat all power lines and cables as energized until proven otherwise
- Stay clear of downed electrical lines
- Numerous downed electrical lines after firestorms Hard to see/hear



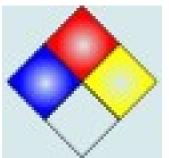
## Chemical Exposures



- Utilize monitoring equipment
- Avoid hazardous atmospheres
- Avoid contact with chemicals
- Stay aware of wind directions
- •Alert local emergency responders if necessary







## Radiation

#### **Potential Sources:**

- Historical Pieces
  - Clocks, dials, ceramics
- Industry Sources
  - Americium, Cesium, Cobalt
- And then there are the home scientists...



## Radiation Exposure



- Follow time, distance, and shielding precautions
- •Use radiation pagers when conducting assessments
- •Follow PPE, personal hygiene and decontamination precautions



## Asbestos and Metals Monitoring

- In many fires, older homes and mobile home parks are impacted:
  - Is asbestos present?
  - Is it a problem with people living around it?
  - How about the workers?
- Air Pollution Control Districts are a resource available for guidance & testing



## Asbestos Personal Monitoring Pump





## Driving in Disaster Areas



- Wear your seat belt at all times
- Avoid distractions
- Watch for emergency vehicles & heavy equipment
- Check the vehicle from site to site
- Don't drive if you are sleepy





## Sun Exposure

- •Use sunscreen and lip balm
- Use protective clothing and eyewear
- •Limit exposure, work in shaded areas





- Stay hydrated
- Monitor workload, take frequent breaks
- •Wear comfortable clothes, reduce time in PPE
- •Limit caffeinated drinks



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## Animal Bites, Stings, and Aggressive Behavior



- •Use insect repellent
- Report displaced wildlife and pets with appropriate personnel
- •Be cautious about where you put your hands and feet
- •Keep dog treats with you!



## Poisonous Plants



- Poison oak is very common in SD rural areas
- Recognize poisonous plants & stay clear
  - •Leaves of 3 leave me be!
- •Wear protective clothing
- Wash exposed areas immediately after contact: soap, rubbing alcohol



## Foodborne & Waterborne Illness



- Avoid cross contamination
  - •Failed septic systems
  - Backed up, overflowing sewer lines
  - •Chemical releases



## Foodborne & Waterborne Illness



- Practice good hand hygiene before eating and drinking
- Assure that your food is from a safe source
- •Maintain proper temperatures
  - Keep a cooler for your team
- Drink bottled water



## Social Conflict



- •Maintain a professional attitude
- Avoid hostile situations and leave unsafe environments
- Report unlawful activities to law enforcement
- Maintain contact with DOC OPS/Safety



## Finding Human Remains



- •If you encounter a body:
  - Act within the scope of your training
  - •Call 911 or USAR teams. Inform DOC
  - Do not attempt to move the body
  - Monitor need for emotional support

## Emergencies in the Field



- Notify your Team Leader, Safety Officer about all injuries
- For minor injuries: Basic First Aid
  - Apply buddy care/first aid
  - Seek a first aid station or clinic
  - Base camp may have medical aid
- For serious injuries
  - Call 911 (keep track of your current location)
  - Know the location of the nearest hospital
  - Maintain communication with the DOC Safety Officer



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