

Hospital First Receiver & the Hazwoper standard Documentation

About the standard

Healthcare workers risk occupational exposures to chemical, biological, or radiological materials when a hospital receives contaminated patients, particularly during mass casualty incidents. These hospital employees, who may be termed *first receivers*, work at a site remote from the location where the hazardous substance release occurred. This distinguishes first receivers from other first responders (e.g., firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel), who typically respond to the incident site.

In order to protect their facility and their employees, hospitals benefit from emergency planning for incidents involving hazardous substances. Most hospital employees are covered by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) standard, which addresses employee protection and training as part of emergency planning for incidents involving hazardous substances. According to OSHA, the training indicated for first receivers depends on the individuals' roles and functions. Training competencies have been defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in their standard NFPA 472 - Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents, 2008 Edition. This standard has been adopted by OSHA.

OSHA letters of interpretation specify that hospitals must provide HAZWOPER First Responder Operations Level training to first receivers who are expected to decontaminate victims or handle victims before they are thoroughly decontaminated. This level of training is appropriate for anyone with a designated role in the Hospital Decontamination Zone. Training core elements must include:

- Understanding the hospital emergency operations plan and their roles in the response.
- Site safety, including risks to receiving personnel.
- Appropriate selection and use of PPE.
- Decontamination procedures.

The Operations Level training related to the use of PPE must include topics such as those specified by OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment Standard ([29 CFR 1910.132](#)). Under that standard, training must be provided to each employee who is required to use PPE. At a minimum, that training must cover the following:

- When PPE is necessary.
- What PPE is necessary.
- How to properly put on, remove, adjust, and wear PPE.
- Limitations of PPE.
- Proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of PPE.

First Responder Awareness Level training is required for those employees who work in the contaminant-free Hospital Post-decontamination Zone, but might be in a position to identify a contaminated victim who arrived unannounced. This group includes ED clinicians, clerks, and triage staff who would be responsible for notifying hospital authorities of the arrival, but would not reasonably be anticipated to have contact with the contaminated victims. First Responder Awareness Level training also is required for hospital security guards who work *away from* the Hospital Decontamination Zone. Security staff assigned

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to roles in the Hospital Decontamination Zone would require First Responder Operations Level training. At a minimum, Awareness Level personnel training should include:

- An understanding of what hazardous substances are, and the risks associated with them in an incident.
- An understanding of the potential outcomes associated with an emergency created when hazardous substances are present.
- The ability to recognize the presence of hazardous substances in an emergency.
- The ability to identify the hazardous substances, if possible.
- An understanding of their role in the hospital's emergency response plan, including site security and control, and decontamination procedures.
- The ability to realize the need for additional resources and to make appropriate notifications to the communication center.

Hospital First Receiver

This training is for hospital-based personnel who, in the course of their duties, are likely to encounter patients who may have been contaminated by hazardous materials. It was designed by **Emergency Film Group** to follow and illustrate the requirements of Hazwoper and NFPA 472, as well as those of the Joint Commission on Healthcare Accreditation as regards emergency planning. Emergency Film Group has been creating training aids for first responders that meet OSHA regulations and NFPA guidelines since 1984. The company identified the need for a dedicated first receiver series, acknowledging that most of the Hazwoper training currently available is geared toward hazmat responders, who have different training needs than first receivers. **Emergency Film Group** had previously developed a program in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency on Mass Casualty Decontamination for Hospitals that is currently training personnel in over 100 hospitals in the Los Angeles area.

The 4 modules of Hospital First Receiver are:

- Recognizing Contaminated Patients
- HICS: The Hospital Incident Command System
- Self Protection
- Patient Decontamination

The online version of this course is intended to serve as a training aid for an 8-hour course of instruction in Awareness and Operations Level competencies. Each module provides video instruction with interactions and chapter quizzes. To be certified at the Operations Level, personnel must undergo a hands-on component to demonstrate their ability to perform certain tasks, including donning, using, and doffing protective clothing and respiratory protection.

Hospital First Receiver was peer reviewed by a technical committee that includes Phil Currance, the Deputy Commander of the Central US NMRT/WMD, US Public Health Service; Janet Rowe-Eikenberry, Coordinator of the EHS Services at the UTenn Medical Center; Zachary Goldfarb, former Special Operations Division, FDNY Emergency Medical Service Command; Paul Penn, founder of Hazmat for Healthcare and the former Manager of EHS at Kaiser Permanente, Sacramento Medical Center; and Dr. Paul Rega, founder of OH-1 DMAT (Ohio). This DVD version of this program is in use at over 400 hospitals, including 28 Veterans Administration hospitals.

Awareness Level Training

This level of training for hospital personnel can be satisfied through Module 1, “Recognizing Contaminated Patients”. This program describes how contamination occurs, provides an understanding of what hazardous substances are, and the symptoms associated with contamination. It shows how to identify patients who may be contaminated and whom to notify. It also describes the training required of first receivers by OSHA.

“Recognizing Contaminated Patients” also serves as refresher training for those who seek to become trained at the Operations Level.

Operations Level Training

This level of training is provided by Module 2, “HICS-The Hospital Incident Command System;” Module 3-“Self Protection;” and Module 4-“Patient Decontamination.”

- Module 2 can help hospitals prepare or update their hospital emergency operations plans and describes the roles first receivers will play in the response. *This module is also helpful in complying with Joint Commission accreditation standards for emergency planning.*
- Module 3 provides an in-depth discussion of respiratory protection and protective clothing used by first receivers, including the importance of using PPE and RP, and how to don, work in, and doff this equipment. It also covers limitations of PPE and proper maintenance and storage.
- Module 4 describes the role of the hospital’s decontamination team, describes how to set up the decon corridor, and how to implement patient decontamination. Because OSHA requires training in the tasks that workers will be expected to carry out, this training provided by this module is necessary for anyone who will work at the Operations Level as part of a decontamination team.