

Module 3: Hazardous Materials and Terrorist Incidents

Lesson 8: Introduction to Special Situations

Self-Study Guide

Lesson Overview

Lesson Purpose	This lesson describes two special situations that you may encounter as a CERT member: Hazardous materials situations and acts of terrorism. Both present special dangers to you. Your actions in these situations may save your life and the lives of others.
Lesson Objectives	After completing this lesson, you should be able to describe the CERT protocols for hazardous materials and terrorist incidents.
Estimated Time	15 minutes
Contents	<p>This lesson includes the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lesson Overview▪ Overview of Hazardous Materials▪ CERT Response in Special Situations▪ Lesson Summary

What Are Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are materials that:

- Corrode other materials.
- Explode or are easily ignited.
- React strongly with water.
- Are unstable when exposed to heat or shock.
- Are toxic to humans, animals, or the environment.

Hazardous materials are part of daily life. We have them in the home, in the workplace, and on the highway.

We use so many hazardous materials that we have a tendency to forget that they pose a risk—to us, our property, and our environment.

How Are Hazardous Materials and Terrorism Related?

Terrorism and hazardous materials are related because most terrorist acts will involve hazardous materials of one type or another.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are all hazardous materials:

- Explosives
- Biological agents
- Chemical agents
- Radiological and nuclear materials

CERT Response in Special Situations

Even after completing the CERT classroom course, you will not be trained to respond to any situation involving hazardous materials. Containing, cleaning up, and disposing of hazardous materials takes special training and special equipment.

Because of the potential danger, CERT members should never attempt to respond to any incident involving hazardous materials. Your safety is **always the number one priority**.

How Should You React to Special Situations?

As a CERT member, treat all known and suspected hazardous materials situations as **STOP** signs.

- Don't touch anything!
- Get away from the incident—uphill (if possible) and upwind.
- Warn others to stay away.
- Report the incident to 9-1-1 immediately.

Complete your sizeup from a distance. Do not attempt to respond. You will learn more about what to do in these situations in the next lessons.

What Should CERT Members Tell Responders?

When you call 9-1-1, provide as much information as you can about:

- What happened (as best you can determine).
- Where it happened.
- The number and types of known injuries.
- What is happening now.
- Who you are.
- Where you are and how you can be reached.

Never use a cell phone or two-way radio if you think that there is a risk from an explosive device!

What if You Become Contaminated?

If you think that you have been exposed to chemical or radiological contamination, leave the contaminated area and wait for professional responders. Use basic decontamination procedures to reduce your risk of injury.

- Remove everything, including jewelry.
- Cut off clothing normally removed over the head.
- Wash your hands before using them to shower.
- Flush your entire body with cool water.
- Blot dry with an absorbent cloth. Put on clean clothes.
- Report to responders who will set up decontamination facilities.

What About Treating Others?

Your personal safety is your first priority. During a hazardous materials or terrorist incident, take self-protective measures only. Do not attempt to treat victims in the contaminated area. Tell people who are leaving the area to:

- Use the basic decontamination procedures. (You can tell them what to do.)
- Wait for responders who will perform complete decontamination.

Knowledge Review

Instructions: Review each statement and then indicate if it is true or false. When you are finished, turn to the next page to check your answers.

1. If an incident involves hazardous materials, CERT members should complete a sizeup as usual.
 True False
2. After completing the classroom training, CERT members will be qualified to respond to hazardous materials incidents.
 True False
3. During hazardous materials incidents, as in any other type of incident, your safety is the highest priority.
 True False
4. If you think that you have been contaminated, you should flush the contaminated area with copious amounts of water.
 True False

Knowledge Review: Answer Key



Instructions: Compare your answers to those shown below.

1. **FALSE:** If an incident involves hazardous materials, CERT members should complete a sizeup as usual.

CERT members should not be activated for incidents involving hazardous materials. If you are at a scene and suspect that hazardous materials are involved, you should leave the area immediately. Go to an uphill (if possible) and upwind location. Gather as much information as you can from a distance, and report the information to 9-1-1 using a landline phone.

2. **FALSE:** After completing the classroom training, CERT members will be qualified to respond to hazardous materials incidents.

Responding to hazardous materials incidents requires specially trained personnel with special equipment. Taking the CERT classroom course will not qualify you to respond to any hazardous materials incident.

3. **TRUE:** During hazardous materials incidents, as in any other type of incident, your safety is the highest priority.

Your safety and the safety of the other CERT members is always the first priority. You can't help anyone else if you become a casualty. Never place yourself at risk during a response.

4. **FALSE:** If you think that you have been contaminated, you should flush the contaminated area with copious amounts of water.

If you think that you have become contaminated, you should complete basic decontamination measures over your whole body.

**Module Overview:
Lesson 9: Hazardous
Materials Safety**

This module will provide you with important information about hazardous materials and terrorist incidents.

In Lesson 9, you will learn:

- How to prevent household chemical emergencies.
- How to identify hazardous materials in storage and in transit.
- What to do if a hazardous materials emergency occurs.

**Module Overview:
Lesson 10: Terrorism
and CERT**

In Lesson 10, you will learn about:

- Terrorist weapons.
- How to recognize when a terrorist incident has occurred or could occur.
- What to do if you suspect that a terrorist incident has occurred.
- What to expect from responders after a terrorist incident occurs.

Lesson Summary

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you learned:

- What hazardous materials are.
- How terrorist incidents relate to hazardous materials incidents.
- CERT protocols for dealing with incidents involving hazardous materials.

You will learn more about hazardous materials and terrorist incidents in the lessons that follow.

Next Lesson

You have completed this lesson. You are now ready to begin Lesson 9: Hazardous Materials Safety.