



July 20, 1990

## ASBESTOS RESPONSE POLICY

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### 1. OBJECTIVES

To create an awareness of the hazards associated with asbestos, and to modify standard firefighting practices at incidents of potential asbestos exposure.

### 2. HEALTH HAZARDS

Asbestos in its natural state or "Asbestos Containing Material" (ACM) which when intact does not present a health hazard. The hazard is created when the material becomes friable and is allowed into the atmosphere and is inhaled or ingested. This occurs when the material is disturbed during fire or overhaul operations, or flakes off from age or deterioration of the protective covering.

### 3. ASBESTOS LOCATIONS

- 3.1 Insulated coverings on boilers, heat pipes or duct linings.
- 3.2 Insulation for Con Edison steam on pipes, in steam manholes, and expansion joints.
- 3.3 Sprayed on asbestos fire retarding for structural steel.
- 3.4 Ceilings (white popcorn-like texture).
- 3.5 All asbestos locations can not be documented. If asbestos is suspected, precautions outlined in this procedure must be taken.

### 4. OPERATIONS

- 4.1 General Tactics
  - 4.1.1 When it is determined that operations involve suspected asbestos contamination, transmit radio signal 10-80, specifying asbestos release.
  - 4.1.2 Minimize commitment of forces as conditions permit. This will expose fewer members and reduce the amount of decontamination necessary.
  - 4.1.3 Strictly enforce mask policy when operating in contaminated area to reduce exposure.
  - 4.1.4 Wet ACM by using a fog or spray stream to prevent the fibers from becoming airborne.

- 4.1.5 Limit overhaul to minimum and use Haz-Mat Unit to complete overhaul.
- 4.1.6 Members who operated may not leave until it is determined they were not exposed, or asbestos was not present. Once the ACM is wet, the major concern is cross-contamination caused by tracking asbestos from one area to another on the soles of boots or shoes, or by moving vehicles or equipment.
- 4.1.7 Isolate members suspected or confirmed to be contaminated to prevent cross-contamination of apparatus or other members. **NO EATING, DRINKING, OR SMOKING** is permitted from the time of exposure until decontamination is complete. SCBA must be used until decon procedures are initiated or member has been washed down.
- 4.2 Interior operations present a greater health hazard due to the heavier concentration of airborne fibers.
- 4.3 Exterior Operations:
  - 4.3.1 The health hazard of airborne asbestos fibers at exterior operations is minimized due to dispersal to the atmosphere and the lack of containment.
  - 4.3.2 Implement the Emergency Response Plan: Hazardous Materials.

## **5. DECONTAMINATION**

- 5.1 If on-site testing is found to be negative, no further action is required and normal operations may resume.
- 5.2 If on-site testing is found to be positive, begin decontamination immediately to expedite the return of units to service.

## **6. UNIT FUNCTIONS**

- 6.1 Safety Operating Battalion establishes and directs decontamination of Fire Department Personnel.
- 6.2 Ladder Company 15 operates the Decontamination Unit.
- 6.3 EMS initiates medical surveillance inside Decontamination Unit. FD personnel may be required to assist EMS.

## **7. CONTAMINATED EQUIPMENT**

- 7.1 Upon transmission of the 10-80 Code 2 signal, an officer from the Special Operations Command (SOC) will respond.
- 7.2 A decontamination kit containing plastic bags, Forms "SOC/1", "SOC/2", "SOC/3" and instructions will be issued to officers of exposed units.

- 7.3 Unit officers are responsible for the inventory of all firefighting equipment placed into the plastic bags. This procedure will be supervised by an officer from SOC.
- 7.4 Haz-Mat Unit will sample suspect areas and assist in the bagging and sealing of overpack drums.
- 7.5 Security, cleaning, return and removal of all suspect material is the responsibility of SOC.

**8. TEMPORARY FIREFIGHTING CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT**

- 8.1 Temporary issuance of firefighting clothing is the responsibility of SOC as per ABC 13-85.
- 8.2 The Incident Commander must arrange for replacement of contaminated apparatus and equipment to restore units to service as soon as possible.

**9. NOTIFICATION OF THE OSHA UNIT**

- 9.1 The OSHA Unit is available to respond to Asbestos emergencies, as needed, to assist the Chief in Charge in making decisions regarding decontamination and other methods of controlling the possible spread of these materials. This is expected to establish consistent criteria for the use of the Decon Unit.

9.2 The OSHA Unit is designated as Car 68.

9.3 The OSHA Unit can be contacted at the following telephone numbers:

Headquarters Office:	(718) 694- 2055
Emergency Command Center:	(718) 694-2094
Pager:	(718) 483-6287
Mobile Phone:	(718) 882-8879

**BY ORDER OF THE FIRE COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT**