I. PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this procedure is to ensure the life and well being of students, faculty, staff and visitors during a hazardous materials incident. The secondary purposes of this procedure are to minimize property loss, minimize the collective time (students, faculty, staff etc.) lost in dealing with the incident and promote effective communication throughout the duration of the incident.

There are many different types of hazardous materials such as compressed gases, corrosive liquids or flammable liquids that are stored, used or transported throughout the campus. In addition there is a major rail facility just east of the campus adjacent to Spur 5. Therefore, there is the potential of a hazardous materials incident to be internal or external on the campus. These procedures should be used by all University of Houston staff, faculty, lessees and subcontractors in the event of a hazardous materials incident.

II. KEY DEFINITIONS

Chemical name: The scientific designation of a chemical in accordance with the nomenclature system developed by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) or the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) rules of nomenclature; or a name that clearly identifies the chemical for the purpose of conducting a hazard evaluation.

Container: Any bag, barrel, bottle, box, can, cylinder, drum, reaction vessel, storage tank, or the like that contains a hazardous chemical. Pipes or piping systems, engines, fuel tanks, or other operating systems in a vehicle, are not considered to be containers.

Exposure: When an individual is subjected to a hazardous material via any route of entry, including inhalation, ingestion, skin contact, or absorption. The term includes potential, possible, or accidental exposure under normal conditions of use or in a reasonably foreseeable emergency.
Hazardous Material: Any substance or compound that has the capability of producing adverse effects on the health and safety of humans.

Incident Command System (ICS): Is the organized approach to effectively control and manage operations at an emergency incident. The individual in charge of the ICS, known as the Incident Commander, is the senior official responding to the incident. No matter what the size and complexity of the incident all decisions and directions are given through one central point of command.

Label: Any written, printed, or graphic material displayed on or affixed to containers of hazardous materials.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS): Written or printed material concerning a hazardous chemical which describes the physical properties and potential adverse health effects and is prepared in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.1200 paragraph g.

Qualified Individual: An individual who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing, or who by extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has successfully demonstrated his or her ability to solve or resolve problems relating to the subject matter, the work, or the project, and is familiar with the hazards involved.

III. PROCEDURES

Initial Report of a Hazardous Materials Incident

Dial 911 to report any potential hazardous materials incidents as soon as you become aware of one.

Then proceed as follows:

1. Remain on scene only if safe to do so.
2. Initiate evacuation procedures if you have any indication that there is an immediate danger to health and safety.
3. If uninjured, and it is safe to do so, remain available as a witness to UH Department of Public Safety and other emergency responders that may arrive on scene.
4. If possible secure a copy of the appropriate MSDS for the materials involved in the incident.

MSDSs are available on the Environmental Health and Safety Department (EHS) website at http://www.uh.edu/ehs/msds.html
Initial Response to Hazardous Materials Incident

The campus shall respond to emergencies using the standards of the nationally recognized Incident Command System (ICS) as its guideline. The ICS enables one or more responding agencies to initiate and conduct a coordinated response to an incident.

The UH Department of Public Safety is (UHDPS) are usually the first to respond to hazardous materials incidents. They will act as the initial on scene coordinator during the initial phase of the incident. For hazardous material incidents, the UHDPS will contact EHS for assistance. Upon arrival on scene, an assessment of the potential threat will be made using the following criteria:

1. Visible health effects on persons in immediate vicinity
2. The toxicity and physical hazards of the released material if known
3. The size or amount of the release and the release location
4. Information supplied by individuals who may have been involved in the release (initial stage) of the incident
5. Information available from the MSDS’s (if known) of materials involved in the incident.

Decision to request outside assistance

Upon arrival and assessment of the incident the UHDPS will reach a decision whether to request outside assistance or whether the incident can be managed with in house resources. UHDPS first responders will normally confer with EHS, however they have the authority to request immediate assistance from the Houston Fire Department Hazardous Materials Response Unit if they see an urgent need.

Incidents that don’t require outside assistance will be managed by EHS. EHS has a limited supply of spill response equipment available and can respond to smaller non-life threatening incidents. UHDPS will assist in traffic control and pedestrian control during the clean-up phase of smaller incidents. The goal will be to restore the affected area to pre-incident conditions as soon as possible.

In the event of an emergency requiring response by off-campus emergency personnel, the command of the incident will be shift to the responding agency [i.e. Houston Fire Department (HFD) or HFD HAZMAT] upon their arrival. UH personnel will provide assistance and support the responders as requested.

IV. INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is critical during a hazardous materials incident. Faculty, staff, students and the community may have to be notified of campus emergencies
using communication tools available during the emergency. All individuals are asked to have patience with others as they attempt to work under emergency circumstances. Communication may be more difficult, and work conditions may not be typical. Communication may be via any of the following:

- Telephone
- E-mail
- Web page updates
- Television and radio broadcast
- Personal interaction
- Campus police car loudspeakers
- Building fire-alarm audio systems

When the Emergency Response Team declares the need for a campus wide dissemination of information any and or all of the above methods may be used to deliver the communication. Students, staff, faculty and visitors are expected to follow the instructions given to them by emergency response team. Typically, instructions will either be to evacuate or shelter-in-place. Some incidents may make going outdoors dangerous. Leaving the area might take too long or put people in harm’s way. In such a case it may be safer for people to stay indoors than to go outside. “Sheltering-in-place” is when people make a shelter out of the place they are in. It is a way for people to make the building as safe as possible to protect themselves until help arrives.

Everyone is expected to remain calm and wait for further instructions. Here are some helpful reminders:

- When advised to relocate, follow the directions of the UH DPS.
- Do not leave building if instructed to shelter in place until the “all clear” is given.
- If relocation is advised, take only your personal belongings (medications, etc) that you would require for a prolonged stay.
- Do not use the elevator (unless instructed to do so).
- Keep campus phone lines open for emergency communications.
- Stay away from outside windows and doors. Keep doors and windows closed.
- Direct individuals who cannot negotiate the stairs to a safe area.
- Offer assistance to individuals with disabilities
V. POST INCIDENT ACTIONS

Plan Deactivation

When emergency conditions are stabilized and the University has resumed normal operations, the Emergency Plan will be de-activated by the Emergency Response Incident Commander. A formal announcement will be disseminated using usual campus/community notification systems.

If the nature of the incident requires an extension of some emergency services, special work groups may be appointed to coordinate those continuing activities. The University has a contract for specialized post emergency remediation services and if needed this support will be called in.

Recovery

The next priority will be to re-establish normal operating conditions. University administration will appoint a Recovery Team that will guide the University back to normal operations. The composition of the Team will be determined by the nature and magnitude of the emergency and the impact it has had upon UH.

All departments and programs that have been impacted will be asked to make an immediate assessment of staffing, materials and equipment that are necessary to restore interim and/or long-term functions. Departments that have prepared business continuity plans should use these plans as guidance in restoring their program.

Included in the recovery phase will be the cost recovery for the incident. Affected departments will be asked to prepare internal cost and loss documentation reports and to submit them to the EHS. Questions concerning current insurance coverage can be directed to the Risk Manager at (713) 743-5865.

Post Incident Critique

The Incident Commander or designee may initiate a post-incident critique as soon as practical following a major emergency incident on campus requiring activation of this plan. The purpose of the critique is to identify and define any problems that may have been encountered during the response, seek alternatives, disclose ways to prevent future incidents and improve the plan.

VI. REFERENCES