An incident involving hazardous materials has a higher probability of causing an evacuation of an affected area than any other incident. By the very nature of the hazard, this type of evacuation often provides very little preparation time. Decisions will need to be made quickly, and citizens moved rapidly.

This procedure identified the method and resources required to execute a small to large scale evacuation.

Levels of Evacuation

Experience has reflected three levels of evacuation. Each requires a different resource commitment. They include: Site Evacuation, Intermediate Level Evacuation, and Large Scale Evacuation

Site Evacuation

Site evacuation involves a small number of citizens. This typically includes the workers at the site, and persons from adjacent occupancies or areas. The citizens are easily evacuated and collected upwind at the perimeter area. Evacuation holding times are typically short, generally less than an hour or two, and citizens are permitted to return to their businesses or homes.

Intermediate Level Evacuation

The next level, or intermediate level, involves larger numbers of citizens and/or affects a larger area. This level affects off-site homes and businesses and normally affects fewer than 100 persons. Persons may remain out of the area for two to four hours or more. Evacuation completion times will be somewhat longer, but generally rapid. Collecting, documenting, and controlling the evacuees becomes more difficult. Off-site collection sites or shelter areas will need to be determined and managed. Some evacuees will leave the area on their own or be sent home by employers. Site perimeters become larger and perimeter security requires more resource. Close coordination with the Police Department and other agencies will be required.

Large Scale Evacuation

A large or concentrated release of a hazardous substance may cause a large off-site evacuation. Thousands of citizens could be evacuated. Rapid initiation of the evacuation process may be required. Evacuees may be out of their homes and businesses for many hours if not days. Evacuation completion time frames will be extended. Evacuation shelters will need to be located, opened and managed. Documentation and tracking of evacuees becomes more important as well as more difficult to manage. Very close coordination with the police and multiple agencies will be required. Site and evacuation perimeters become extended and require much more resources to maintain. Security of the evacuated area becomes a concern. In most cases, the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be opened to support the evacuation and site operations.

Time Factor Considerations

Time factors are also an important consideration in the evacuation decision.

A rapidly developing moving toxic cloud will demand a more immediate size-up and quick decision making. Such forced speed of decision making often is made with less information than a slow moving event. Accuracy of information will also be limited.

The speed of the developing hazard will dictate the speed of evacuation. Immediate evacuation will require more resources than a slower developing event.

It will take time to complete the evacuation. The more people to be evacuated, and the distance between the occupancies to be evacuated, the more time required. The greater numbers needing evacuation will also require a greater resource commitment.

Decision to Evacuate

The decision to evacuate needs to be considered quickly and early. Delays in initiating evacuations can expose greater numbers of the public to the hazardous product. An unnecessary evacuation should be avoided. However, once the hazard has been identified and verified, the process of deciding who, when, and how to evacuate should proceed quickly.

In some cases, in-place sheltering (staying indoors) may provide adequate protection and should be a serious consideration in the decision making process.

Factors to consider when evaluating the evacuation need include:

- Product Toxicity (as a health hazard)
- Concentrations (before it becomes a health hazard)
- Length of Time Exposed
- Weather Conditions (temperature, humidity)
- Wind Direction (direction, speed)
- Wind Changes
- Predicted Weather Changes
- Distances From Site Requiring Evacuation
- Evacuation Risk to Public (bringing them outdoors)
- Infiltration Into Buildings
- Shelter Locations
- Transportation Needs and Availability
- Evacuation Time Factors
- Resources Required for Evacuation
- Concentrations of the population in the area

In some situations, in-place sheltering can be used to protect the public rather than to initiate an evacuation. In-place sheltering can be considered during the following circumstances:

- The hazardous material has been identified as having a low or moderate level health risk.
- The material has been released from its container and is now dissipating.
- Leaks can be controlled rapidly and before evacuation can be completed.
- Exposure to the product is expected to be short-term and of low health risk.
- The public can be adequately protected by staying indoors.

Command may need to provide instructions to the affected public regarding the need to stay indoors and in such protective measures as shutting down their evaporative cooling systems, and sealing their buildings.

Command Organization

Once Command has determined evacuation to be necessary, adequate resources need to be called to the scene and appropriate agencies notified to respond. A central staging area for all agencies should be considered.

The Incident Command Organization will need to be expanded to include other Sections/Branches. This level of Command structure may need to be implemented to more effectively manage a large scale incident. Sections/Branches to be considered include:

- Public Information Sector
- Geographic Sectors (Multiple Sectors)
- Police Liaison Sector
- Staging Sector
- Transportation Sector
- Police Resource
- Shelter Sectors
- Other Agency Liaison Sectors
    a. Operations Section
    b. Administrative Section
    c. Planning Section
    d. Logistics Section
- Evacuation Branch/Sector

Command Responsibilities

Command's responsibilities include the following items:

- Rapidly size up the situation to determine the need to evacuate.
- Determine evacuation perimeters.
- Determine the number and location of shelter sites and communicate the locations to the command organization. (Use the CAD INFO SHELTERS or the Red Disaster Operations Manual for shelters and maps.)
- Order evacuation.
- Provide resources required.
- Establish Police liaison.
- Order the alert of other appropriate agencies.
- Expand the command organization to meet the incident/evacuation needs.
- Establish an evacuation plan and communicate the plan to sectors and agency liaisons.
- Monitor, support, and revise the evacuation process as necessary.
- Evacuate persons from the area of greatest danger first.
- Assign specific areas to evacuate in order to avoid duplication or missed areas [use Fire Department map book--either page numbers (i.e., NE0107) or hydrant zone numbers as grids].
- Provide the transportation necessary for evacuees.
- Provide continuing command of the evacuation, de-commitment, and return of evacuees.

Police Responsibilities

The Police Department will be an integral part of the evacuation process, as a large portion of the evacuation may be accomplished by police officers. Police responsibilities include:

- Provide a ranking officer to the incident command post.
- Provide a ranking officer to the Evacuation Sector/Evacuations Branch.
- Provide a communication system for police resources.
- Provide police resources needed for evacuation.
- Provide traffic control and traffic routing.
- Provide perimeter security.
- Provide evacuation zone security.

Dispatch Center's Responsibilities

- Dispatch appropriate resource as requested.
- Notify appropriate Fire and City officials.
- Notify the appropriate support agencies as requested or listed in standard operating procedures.
- Notify the Administrative Duty Officer and provide a status report.
- Initiate recall of additional Dispatch personnel to meet the demands of the incident.
- Notify the City telephone switchboard operator and provide the operator a status report. Update the operator as needed.
- Notify the hospitals in the area of evacuation (both those exposed and not exposed) and provide a status report and updates as needed (intermediate and large scale evacuations).

Public Information Officer's Responsibilities

- Notify the news media and provide status reports and updates as necessary.
- Provide the media with consistent and accurate evacuation instructions as provided by Command or the Evacuation Branch/Sector.
- Utilize the media and coordinate evacuation notices through news media.

Red Cross Responsibilities

Once long term sheltering is identified, the Red Cross will open and manage shelters. Early notification is required. The Red Cross will need up to three hours to get adequate personnel, equipment and supplies to the shelter sites.

Some Fire Department resources may need to be committed to the shelters, particularly in the area of initial opening and staffing by a shelter crew, and later for potential emergency medical support.

Evacuation Branch/Sector Responsibilities

An Evacuation Branch/Sector must be established. On large-scale evacuations, Evacuation Branch should have a separate radio channel. Various sub-level sectors would also need to be established and report to Evacuation Branch.

Typically a large commitment of police officers will be required to accomplish an evacuation. The Evacuation Branch officer must obtain a ranking police officer at his/her location in order to closely coordinate evacuation efforts. An appropriate commitment of police resource must be obtained. Evacuation responsibilities include:

- Obtain resource needed to evacuate.
- Obtain ranking police officer for liaison.
- Establish sectors as needed.
- Provide sectors objectives and specific areas to evacuate (use Fire Department map pages or hydrant zones in Fire Department map book for grids).
- Provide sectors with shelter location and instructions.
- Provide sectors with evacuation instruction pads.
- Provide sectors with private vehicle routing instructions (out of the area).

- Obtain/provide buses or other transportation to those requiring transportation out of the area. (For large scale evacuation, start with two buses and request more as needed.)
- Evacuate those at greatest risk first.
- Evacuate the greatest concentrated areas next (i.e., apartment complex).
- Consider individual sectors for large population occupancies (i.e., multi-story buildings, large apartment complexes, schools, etc.).
- As individual geographic or grid sectors complete their evacuations, terminate the sector identity and reassign resources to other developing sectors (for large scale evacuation).
- Closely document and maintain records of the evacuation process to avoid duplication or missed areas.
- Document those addressees refusing to leave.

On-Site Notification to Evacuate

Door-to-door notification is time-consuming. In many cases, adequate resources and time is not available to do this type of face-to-face notification. Use of sirens, air horns and PA systems will speed the alert process.

When making door-to-door evacuations:
- Be in uniform.
- Wear your helmet.

Face-to-face notification should include the following instructions:
- There's been a hazardous materials incident.
- You are in danger.
- Leave immediately.
- Go to the shelter (location).
- Take (   ) route out of area.
- Do you need transportation?
- Provide the customer with evacuation instructions.

Take the following items:
- Wallet/purse
- House & car keys
- Money
- Eye glasses
- Medications
- Proper clothing
- Pets

In other situations, where immediate and rapid evacuation makes door-to-door notification impossible, use the following notification method:
- Use 3 five-second blasts of the siren while on the "YELP" setting.
- Followed by the standard evacuation instruction over PA system (see instructions above)
- Use maximum volume on PA system.
- Proceed slowly to maximize notification.
- Initiate notification at the beginning of each block and each 50 yards after that.

Once each assigned grid of objectives is complete, report completion to the Evacuation Branch/Sector officer.

Refusal to Leave

Some citizens may refuse to leave. A few methods of persuasion to leave include:
- Be in uniform.
- Wear your helmet.
- Wear SCBA and facepiece (air hose may not need to be connected) when advising the citizen to leave.

- Ask for next of kin and a phone number.
- Write the next of kin information down.

Evacuations follow somewhat of a triage philosophy--we'll evacuate the greatest number for the greatest benefit. Individual refusals will be left to fend for themselves. There simply may not be enough time or resources to initiate forced removal of persons from their homes. However, documentation of the refusal should be done. Write the address down (or if radio traffic permits, radio the address to the Evacuation Branch/Sector officer).

Transportation Sector Responsibilities

A Transportation Branch/Sector should be a priority consideration for any intermediate or large-scale evacuation. Not all citizens will have a vehicle available to them.
- Obtain buses (start with minimum of two) and other vehicles that can be used for transportation.
- Stage all transportation resources.
- Put one firefighter (or police officer) with a radio on each vehicle equipped with a Fire or Police Department radio.
- Coordinate with Evacuation Branch/Sector the pick-up points or addresses of those citizens needing transportation.

On-Duty Deputy

Any time more than ten (10) persons are evacuated, the Duty Deputy advises the City Manager, or his/her designee, of the situation.

If the Duty Deputy cannot respond to the incident or is delayed, the Duty Deputy will need to contact the incident command staff for a status report. Command should be prepared to respond to this request via cellular telephone, etc.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Operations

If a significant or major evacuation occurs, the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will go into operation. The EOC will collect department heads and senior staff from the Fire, Police, City Manager's Office, Public Works, and other City departments to the EOC. The EOC's objective is to use the City's resources to support the incident operations and evacuations.

Command should be prepared for this support and potential policy direction in regards to the incident and evacuation operations.

If the EOC is in operation, Command must assign an EOC liaison as part of the Command Organization. The EOC Liaison must have a radio communications link (another radio channel) with the EOC and a cellular telephone link. If the EOC has a CAD Terminal, the EOC liaison will need access to an MDT. (The MDT and cellular phones are available in any Battalion vehicle and some staff vehicles.)

Responsibilities of the EOC Liaison Officer are:
- Obtain a radio communications link with the EOC (through Dispatch Center on a separate channel).
- Obtain a cellular telephone or other communication link with the EOC.
- Obtain an immediate status report from Command and provide that report to the EOC fire officer.
- Provide an immediate report to the EOC on any changes in plans, strategy, problems encountered, etc.
- Provide progress reports every 30 minutes unless the EOC requires more frequent or less frequent reports.
- Act as the communication link from EOC to Command.
- Provide Command with direction, policy information, etc. that is communicated from the EOC.

The EOC will remain in operation for the duration of the evacuation. Command will maintain an EOC liaison and a communication link with the EOC throughout the evacuation, including de-commitment and return of evacuees.

Return Evacuees

The decision to return evacuees to their homes will be the sole responsibility of the Fire Department Incident Commander. If the EOC is operating, the decision to return evacuees will be made by the EOC staff. No other City agency will be authorized to order the return.

Returning evacuees may require transportation. A Transportation Branch/Sector may need to be reactivated to provide for these needs.