CAMBRIDGE LEPC's Biotech Subcommittee
Guidelines for
Pre-ER Decontamination after Laboratory Exposures

INTENT: This guide has been developed to help clarify the type and extent of decontamination a patient(s) should receive following an accidental laboratory exposure. The primary objective of this effort is to assure timely treatment of the exposed patient, protection of first responders and emergency medical personnel, and prevention of contamination of facilities and equipment. It outlines specific information that must be provided by representatives of the facility or the patient to the first-responders and emergency-medical-personnel to help evaluate the situation and determine the extent of personnel-decontamination appropriate for the exposure incident.

GUIDELINE for LABORATORY FACILITY:
In the event of personnel exposure to laboratory chemicals or other hazardous materials, the following information shall be provided to First-Responders, and transported along with patient to Emergency-Medical-Facility.
PROVIDE:

1. Name of hazardous material(s) involved in writing.
2. A copy of MSDS for the hazardous material(s).
3. Description of signs and symptoms the patient is experiencing from exposure.
4. Detailed description of the extent of exposure/contamination (parts of body, amount of material, etc.) of the patient.
5. Detailed description of what has been done in-house to decontaminate the patient (specifics on type and extent of decontamination).
6. Information in writing on any "special concerns" regarding this exposure. Explain whether exposure to the patient could result in secondary contamination or infection.
7. The name & phone number in writing of a knowledgeable-person who can be contacted for further information/clarification (This may be the lab manager and/ or a representative from the EHS Office.).
8. Any other relevant information.

Comment: Sodium, Phosphorus and other water-reactive materials may produce heat or a more toxic chemical when rinsing with an eyewash or shower. Sites should develop specific procedures for decontamination following exposures/contamination involving water-reactive materials.

GUIDELINE for EMERGENCY PERSONNEL:
When faced with a potential chemical or other hazardous material exposure in a laboratory the following steps shall be used as guidance in determining if full body decontamination is needed prior to transporting a patient to a medical facility.
REQUEST INFORMATION:

1. Is product known? If so, what is it?
2. Is there a copy of the MSDS available for the hazardous material(s)?
3. What signs and symptoms is the patient displaying?
4. What is the extent of exposure/contamination (parts of body, amount of material, etc.)

5. What has been done regarding the exposure (specifics on type and extent of decontamination)?
6. What is the secondary contamination potential?

Using this information, first responders can determine how extensive the decontamination of the patient must be in order to protect themselves, their equipment, and hospital personnel from secondary contamination or exposure. If unable to get answers for these questions or if conditions dictate, full body decontamination may be undertaken.

NOTE: As always, it is the prerogative of the first-responders and/or emergency-medical-personnel to require additional precautionary measures and/or decontamination beyond what this guideline would recommend. This guide is not intended to supersede the judgment and expertise of emergency responders, merely to support them in making informed decisions on the extent of personnel-decontamination suited to the situation.