5-06/070.20 - Weapons of Mass Destruction, Definitions

Weapons of mass destruction are generally referred to as a chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, or large explosive (CBRNE) weapons.

A hazardous material (HazMat) is any hazardous substance or combination of substances that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality, irreversible, or incapacitating illness, or pose a present or potential hazard to health, safety, or the environment. These include chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents.

Chemical weapons include nerve agents, blister agents, blood agents, choking agents, incapacitating agents, or any toxic industrial chemical (TIC) utilized as a weapon.

Biological weapons include pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, rickettsia, yeasts, fungi, toxins, vectors, and endogenous biological regulators used as a weapon.

Radiological weapons include radiological dispersal devices which is any explosive device utilized to spread radioactive material; or a simple radiological dispersal device which is any act or container designed to release radiological material as a weapon without an explosion.

Nuclear weapons include traditional nuclear bombs (e.g. suitcase nukes) and improvised nuclear devices which are explosive devices designed to cause a nuclear yield.

Weaponization is the deliberate processing, preparation, packaging, or synthesis of any substance for use as a weapon or munition. “Weaponized agents” are those agents or substances prepared for dissemination through any explosive, thermal, pneumatic, or mechanical means.