5-14/090.00 Handling Chemical - Biological Exposure Incidents

The use of chemical or biological agents such as sarin gas or anthrax, as a weapon or as a hoax, can disrupt routine, monopolize resources, and threaten facility, staff and inmate safety, and security. The actual use of a chemical or biological agent in the custody environment has the potential to cause major or life-threatening injuries to inmates and personnel. Chemical agents are detected at the time of exposure. Therefore, immediate measures must be taken to establish an effective and total containment. Biological agents may not become evident in the first seventy-two hours unless a threat or warning is received, or by the appearance of mass symptoms within a short period of time.

Since there has never been an incident of an actual release of any biological agent based on a given threat, IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF THIS DIVISION TO HANDLE ANY THREAT OF BIOLOGICAL ATTACK OR EXPOSURE AS WE WOULD TREAT A BOMB THREAT, UNTIL IT IS DETERMINED TO BE AN ACTUAL INCIDENT.

Nothing in this section shall preclude unit commanders from establishing unit orders, specific to their facility, regarding chemical or biological agent exposure and containment.

Objectives

The objectives of Custody Division personnel in incidents of threats of biological agent exposure include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying the credibility of the threat
- Following the Department's guidelines for the handling of bomb or anthrax threats (see E.O.B. advisory "Responding to Anthrax Threat Incidents")
- If a suspicious device is found, isolating the area and handling as an actual exposure incident
- Documenting the incident on a Complaint Report (SH-AD 49) with the classification "11418.5 P.C. - Weapons of Mass Destruction Threat," and statistical code 154

The objectives of Custody Division personnel in incidents of actual chemical or biological agent exposure include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying the credibility of the threat
- Identifying the type of agent (i.e., chemical or biological), and its source
- Containment and isolation of the area of exposure and any exposed persons
- Maintaining facility and prisoner security
- Notification to all necessary agencies (E.O.B., Fire, F.B.I., Dept. of Health Services, etc.)
- Establishment of a unified command post with responding agencies
- Decontamination and medical treatment of exposed or injured persons
- Completion of all required reports
- Refer to E.O.B. advisory "Responding to Anthrax Threat Incidents"

Chain of Command

The watch commander of the effected facility shall be the incident commander in all instances of chemical or biological agent exposure. If persons are exposed, or the exposure is discovered while persons are in transit, the receiving facility watch commander shall be notified immediately and shall become the incident commander. The incident commander shall establish liaison with the Fire Department incident commander, as well as the senior representative from the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services.

Watch Commander Responsibilities

The watch commander shall ensure that the effected area is completely contained and isolated as soon as possible. If an exposure occurs in a building equipped with an air circulating system (HVAC), the watch commander shall insure that the system is immediately shut off to prevent further facility contamination. To determine the credibility of the threat, the watch commander shall review the information regarding the exposure including, but not limited to:

- Type of agent involved (chemical or biological)
- Method of delivery (aerosol, powder, an explosive device, etc.)
- Source of information (informant or threatening letter or call)
- Prior warning or post claim (will vs. has occurred)
- Presence of a device or suspect material
- If the agent is airborne or non-airborne

The watch commander shall assure that all necessary notifications are made in a timely manner including:

Sheriff's E.O.B.	[REDACTED TEXT]
L.A. County Fire Department dispatch (Haz-mat)	[REDACTED TEXT]
L.A. City Fire Dept. dispatch for Bauchet St. facilities	[REDACTED TEXT]
F.B.I.	[REDACTED TEXT]
Medical Alert Center (Via SCC.)	[REDACTED TEXT]
Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau	[REDACTED TEXT]
Assisting Units if additional personnel needed.	

After hours, Sheriff's E.O.B. can be notified via the Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau. E.O.B. can assist with notifications to the FBI, etc., as well as assist the watch commander in conducting a final threat assessment.

The watch commander shall respond to the command post and establish a unified command with outside agencies (Fire Department, Department of Health Services, etc.). In the event of a protracted incident, the watch commander may authorize the activation of the facility E.O.C. The watch commander shall insure the timely reporting of the incident by the handling personnel.

Line Sergeant Responsibilities

The line sergeant shall immediately respond to the scene to direct personnel and ensure that the effected area is contained and isolated. The area of contamination shall be designated as the "red" or "hot" zone. No personnel shall enter this area without proper protective gear, including self contained breathing apparatus. Persons already in the "red" zone shall be evacuated to an "orange" or "warm" zone, for decontamination and/or medical triage. The line sergeant shall insure that inmate security precautions are in place at all times.

The line sergeant shall coordinate with the Fire Department and the Department of Health Services in selecting an area for the establishment of a command post, and notify the watch commander. The line sergeant shall also coordinate with the Fire Department and the Department of Health Services in selecting a staging area, an "orange" decontamination and medical triage area, and direct all personnel to the appropriate locations.

Protection of the operation and security for the inmates and facility is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Department. It shall be the responsibility of the line sergeant to supervise personnel to ensure a safe operation and thorough effort including:

- A safe approach by responding personnel, stay upwind and uphill
- Absolute containment and isolation of the effected area
- Identification and treatment of all exposed or injured persons
- Search for device, including a search for secondary devices, only if properly protected

The watch sergeant shall ensure that all required reports and documentation are completed in a timely manner.