

SAFETY ALERT

No. 01-04

PROCEDURES – TOXIC AIR RELEASE

November 2001

These procedures are designed to protect students and staff in the event of an airborne release of toxic materials. Please note that building evacuation may not be the best course of action. For certain types of incidents, the most prudent action may be to remain indoors (“Shelter-in-Place” or “Lockdown”). Short term chemical releases to the atmosphere will often dissipate quickly, and seeking shelter inside buildings could minimize the risk of exposure.

The decision to remain indoors or to evacuate the building requires judgment, and must be based on the nature and extent of the chemical released. Following are three potential scenarios and the appropriate response procedures for each:

UNKNOWN OR POTENTIALLY TOXIC SUBSTANCE IS RELEASED INSIDE A ROOM OR BUILDING:

1. Evacuate the room or building as directed by School Administrator. Note: Upon evacuation order, take student roster.
2. Call 911, School Police (213) 625-6631, and OEHS (213) 241-3199. Specify the exact location of the release (e.g. area, building, or room).
3. Proceed to an evacuation area which is upwind from the affected room or building.
4. Standby until further advised by the School Administrator.

POTENTIALLY TOXIC SUBSTANCE IS RELEASED OR SPILLED OUTDOORS AND IS LOCALIZED:

1. Remove students from the affected area, upwind from the substance.
2. Establish a safe perimeter to ensure personnel do not reenter the area.
3. Call 911, School Police (213) 625-6631, and OEHS (213) 241-3199. Specify the exact location of the release (e.g. area, building, or room).
4. Do not reenter the area until authorized by emergency personnel or School Administrator.

TOXIC AIRBORNE SUBSTANCE IS RELEASED IN THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY:

1. If the Site Administrator determines, or if advised by local authorities, that a potentially toxic substance has been released to the atmosphere, the School Administrator will initiate a “Shelter-in-Place” order.
2. All personnel should remain indoors; or if outdoors, should immediately go indoors.
3. Close and lock all doors and windows. Seal gaps under doors and windows with wet towels or duct tape.
4. Turn off all heating and air conditioning units and all sources of ignition such as pilot lights. If available, use tape, plastic, or aluminum wrap to seal all air vents.
5. Close as many internal doors as possible, and stay away from windows.
6. Turn on radio or television for information concerning the incident.
7. Continue “Shelter-in-Place” until notified by the fire or police department, at which time the School Administrator should sound the “all-clear” signal.

This Safety Gram provides general guidance for response to a toxic air release. Please refer to the Emergency/Disaster Procedures Manual for further details.

If you have questions regarding this Safety Gram, please call the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199 or School Police at (213) 625-6631.