

RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge this department's, governmental entities and/or any of this department's employees' civil or criminal liability in any way. It is not to be construed as the creation of a particular standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to any complaint, demand for settlement, or any other form of grievance or litigation. Violations of this directive, if substantiated, can only form the basis for intra-departmental administrative sanctions.

Chief of Police: Jason Soto /s/		
Approving Deputy Chief: Thomas Robinson /s/		
General Order No: P-625-21	Issued: Dec 17 th , 2021	
General Order Title: HAZARDOUS, SUSPICIOUS OR UNKNOWN SUBSTANCES		

I. POLICY

The Reno Police Department is committed to providing the safest possible environment to its community and its employees and has established this general order for responding to incidents involving hazardous substances which include but aren't limited to drug labs, accidental chemical spills and criminal acts involving hazardous substances.

II. DEFINITIONS

Clandestine Drug Lab – An illegal lab used to manufacture, compound, convert, process, or prepare by chemical extraction or synthesis, a controlled substance. These labs are called clandestine because they are operated in secrecy or concealment for the purposes of subversion or deception.

Hazards Response Team – The Hazards Response Team is comprised of officers trained to respond to incidents that potentially involve chemical, biological, radiological and/or nuclear hazards.

Hazardous Substance – A substance that has one or more inherent hazardous properties including flammability, explosiveness, toxicity, and the ability to oxidize.

Incident Commander – For the purpose of this general order, an Incident Commander is any law enforcement officer, regardless of rank or assignment, in charge of the response to an incident that requires or may require the activation of the Hazards Response Team.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Various types of clothing or apparatus designed to prevent inhalation, skin contact, or ingestion of hazardous chemicals.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – The agency that sets the standards and enforces the guidelines delineated in the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH-Act) of 1970. Clandestine labs fall under OSHA CFR 1910-120 (HAZWOPER), and are considered hazardous waste generators.

Respiratory Protection Plan – OSHA-mandated rules require employers to provide respiratory PPE and training to any employee who is required to enter a hazardous breathing environment.

The Respiratory Protection Plan must include medical testing, training, and proof of employee competency with the equipment, fit-testing for each employee, and monthly inspections and evaluations of the equipment and program

III. PROCEDURES

1) PRE-RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS

In order to ensure officers are capable of safely encountering known hazardous or suspicious substances, the department will ensure personnel are supplied PPE.

A. Employee Responsibilities – Department employees who are assigned PPE are responsible for:

1. Having their PPE available while on duty.
2. The care and maintenance of assigned PPE as per the Code of Appearance G.O.
3. Inspecting PPE and ensuring it is functional. If damaged, the employee is responsible for notifying their supervisor, the Hazards Response Team Supervisor and the Supply Clerk.

B. Hazards Response Team Supervisor Responsibilities – Hazards Response Team supervisors are responsible for the department's Respiratory Protection Plan. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Ensuring personnel assigned PPE are trained in its use, care and maintenance.
2. Ensuring personnel assigned respiratory equipment are fit-tested.
3. Ensuring the department has sufficient supply of PPE.

2) RESPONSE TO HAZARDOUS, SUSPICIOUS OR UNKNOWN SUBSTANCES

Although the Reno Police Department assigns police officers to investigate reports of hazardous substances, many times the presence of a hazardous substance is unknown until discovered by Reno Police Officers, Community Services Officers or other employees working in the field who happen upon them during traffic stops, area checks or during calls for service. The listed procedures are designed to minimize exposure to hazardous substances, aid in the collection of necessary items of evidentiary value essential for prosecution and ensure areas containing hazardous substances are decontaminated.

A. Initial Responding Employee Responsibilities – All employees shall remain observant of possible signs of hazardous substances in accordance with applicable training. When a suspected hazardous substance is located, employees shall make every effort to:

1. Back out of the area, request assistance and notify a supervisor, and;
2. Notify Reno Fire Department, and;
3. Establish a perimeter around the affected area to minimize exposure to others, and;
4. Evacuate the affected area, and;
5. Evaluate those being evacuated to determine their involvement and determine criminality.

B. Incident Commander's Responsibilities – Upon notification that an officer, CSO or other RPD employee has located a suspected hazardous substance the Incident Commander shall:

1. Respond to the scene and ensure that a perimeter has been established and evacuations are underway, if not completed, and;
2. Ensure personnel don personal protective equipment, and;
3. Ensure anyone who has been exposed is quarantined, until the substance type has

- been confirmed, to minimize exposure to others, and;
4. Coordinate with the Reno Fire Department (RFD) and the Hazards Response Team to determine next steps. RFD is responsible for determining their response and the Hazards Response Team supervisor is responsible for determining their response, and;
 5. Establish unified incident command whenever RFD and/or the Hazards Response Team is responding, and;
 6. Remain on scene until relieved by the Hazards Response Team supervisor.

C. Hazards Response Team Supervisor Responsibilities – Upon notification of an incident involving a hazardous substance, the supervisor shall:

1. Obtain a brief from the supervisor on scene, and;
2. Evaluate the need for additional resources and the appropriate level of response, and;
3. Evaluate the need for a tactical response and coordinate with the SWAT Lieutenant whenever appropriate, and;
4. Assign Hazards Response Team members to respond whenever necessary, and;
5. Assign a safety officer, and;
6. Ensure only that evidence which is essential for prosecution is collected and any collection is done in accordance with the Evidence Collection G.O., and;
7. Ensure all Hazards Response Team members are following appropriate safety protocols, and;
8. Coordinate with RFD, and;
9. Ensure the affected area, personnel, citizens, suspects and equipment are appropriately decontaminated.

D. Hazards Response Team Member Responsibilities – Upon notification to respond to the scene of an incident by a Hazards Response Team Supervisor, Hazards Response Team Members shall:

1. Respond to an incident in accordance with direction provided by the Hazards Response Team supervisor, and;
2. Report directly to the Hazards Response Team Supervisor. If direction is given by other supervisors, ensure the Hazards Response Team supervisor is made aware, and;
3. Unless exigent circumstances dictate otherwise, follow only the direction given by the Hazards Response Team supervisor.