

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO

The second Thursday of November is a big day at _____ School. This year marks the third annual Turkey Trot Race. The fun-filled day of student and parent activities includes a ½-mile run for each class. Parent and teacher events are also scheduled.

It is a perfect day for the festivities, with clear skies, moderate temperatures, and winds from the southwest at 3 miles per hour.

At 11:30 a.m., first-grade students, together with 15 parents and 10 teachers, have returned to the cafeteria for lunch. The kindergarten class, along with 25 parents and 10 teachers, have just arrived in the race area, which is located _____ of the third grade classrooms and _____ of the basketball courts. At 11:40 a.m., one of the teachers at the race area notifies the principal that a strong ammonia odor is present and that she has heard police or fire sirens in the vicinity. The parents and other teachers present are quite concerned.

Scenario Questions

1. Based on the information available at this time, what are your immediate concerns?

The groups' immediate concerns should center around the safety of the students, parents, and teachers who are outside.

2. What initial actions should you take?

The groups should establish their command structure, then order an orderly but immediate reverse evacuation and shelter in place.

3. What should you do next?

The immediate need is to ensure that the building is safe for sheltering in place until the situation can be assessed. If not mentioned by the groups, suggest that appropriate actions would include:

- **Turning off the air circulator for the building.**
- **Calling 9-1-1 to report the odor, determine how bad the situation is, explain the actions they've taken, and request direction on other protection measures they should take.**

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO (CONTINUED)

4. Draw your initial ICS organization in the space below, including personnel assigned to each position (by title), in the space below.

5. For what contingencies should you plan?

Some of the contingencies that the groups should mention include:

- **The possibility that some persons will be overcome by the ammonia vapors.**
- **The possible need to evacuate the facility.**

The groups may list other contingencies as well.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO UPDATE #1

[Distribute this handout 20 minutes into the exercise!]

The principal has ordered that everyone at the race event report to the cafeteria and remain there until the situation is resolved. As the children head back to the school, several start pushing and shoving in their rush to “get away from the smell.” One little girl has fallen and banged her head on the sidewalk. A parent has carried her to the nurse’s office, but she is bleeding heavily from a laceration just above her right eye.

The school nurse has sent a parent to report that five students and two parents have come to her office complaining of difficulty breathing. One of the students is asthmatic but the nurse does not know whether or not to allow the student to use his inhaler.

Update #1 Questions:

1. What actions should you take based on this new information?

The actions that the groups should definitely mention include:

- **Activation of the school medical team to the nurse’s office to assist with triage and treatment.**
- **Calling 9-1-1 to request immediate medical information for the asthmatic child and to request emergency medical services units to be dispatched to the school.**
- **Initiating student accountability procedures in the cafeteria.**
- **Notification of the district office.**

The groups may suggest other actions based on their school plans and procedures.

2. Draw your current ICS organization in the space below.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO UPDATE #1 (CONTINUED)

3. How will you notify parents? What will you tell them?

Parents should be notified using the procedures incorporated in the school plan. If the school plan does not include a procedure for parent notification, suggest that the groups record this as a “lesson learned” from the exercise and address it when they return to their schools. Then, suggest that notification can probably be made most quickly and efficiently by preparing a media release that includes:

- The situation as it is currently known.
- What school personnel have done to ensure that all students are safe.
- A strong suggestion not to attempt to pick up children at this time.
- A request not to call the school or district office.
- Some mention of how updated information will be relayed as it becomes available.

The parents of the injured girl and of the students who are exhibiting breathing problems should be notified by phone.

4. For what contingencies should you plan?

The groups should mention several contingencies including the need to:

- Shelter in place for an extended period of time.
- Evacuate the building.

The groups may mention other contingencies as well.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO UPDATE #2

[Distribute this handout 35 minutes into the exercise!]

It is 11:45 a.m. A fire department official has called the school to notify the principal of an anhydrous ammonia leak at an adjacent warehouse immediately south of the school. The fire department recommends an immediate evacuation of the school and surrounding neighborhoods and instructs the principal to evacuate from the parking lot at the southeast corner of the school facility.

Teachers at the cafeteria report that parents indicate that they want to leave immediately and take their children with them. Parents' vehicles are parked on the streets surrounding the school and in the school parking lot.

Update #2 Questions:

1. What actions should school personnel take based on the directions received from the fire department?

Among the actions that should be identified by the groups include:

- **Contacting transportation to arrange for busing of the students, faculty, staff, and parents.**
- **Notifying the teachers and parents in the cafeteria of the need to evacuate so that they can begin preparing the students.**
- **Notifying the district office.**
- **Preparing an updated media release.**

The groups may suggest other actions in addition to those above.

2. How many buses are required to accomplish a complete evacuation? How long will it take them to arrive? What is your estimated time requirement for completing the evacuation?

The groups' responses to this question will be dependent on their local situations.

3. Will you need to make additional ICS assignments to accomplish the evacuation? If so, draw your new organization below.

The groups may decide that additional assignments are necessary or not. Regardless of their decision, ensure that no individual has responsibility for too many children. Remind the groups that the parents are available to help.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO UPDATE #2 (CONTINUED)

4. What will you tell the parents who want to take their children and leave?

The groups' responses to this question will depend on the State's laws and regulations. Parents should be made aware of the risk of exposure while walking to their cars and advised that it is safer to evacuate with the remainder of the school population. If parents and their children are to leave, student accountability procedures should be followed. Parents should be advised of the wind direction and should be directed to use the exit nearest the southeast corner of the school.

5. For what contingencies must you plan?

Among the contingencies that the students should plan for are:

- **The potential for other students, staff, or parents to become ill.**
- **Ensuring adequate student accountability during the evacuation.**

The groups may present other contingencies as well.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SCENARIO UPDATE #3

[Distribute this handout 60 minutes into the exercise!]

As evacuation efforts are being coordinated, 20 additional children complain of feeling sick. The teachers are voicing their reluctance to permit the children to leave the school. They feel it is much safer to stay inside.

One parent who has decided to leave wants to take other children who live in the same neighborhood.

Update #3 Questions:

1. What should you do about the children who are feeling sick?

If necessary, additional staff should be assigned to the medical triage/treatment area. Question the students about how they are feeling. Complaints other than breathing difficulties are probably psychological (because other symptoms would be caused by skin contact) but should be addressed. Those with breathing problems should be kept calm. If necessary, additional EMS units should be requested.

2. What should you do about the parent who wants to take additional children home?

Legally, the school cannot release the children to anyone who is not authorized by the parents. Because of the potential risk in this situation, it is advisable (unless State laws and regulations direct otherwise) not to allow parents to take other children with them even if they are listed as an emergency contact by those children's parents.

3. How will you ensure that the entire school facility is evacuated and that everyone (including students, parents, and staff) is accounted for?

The groups should present the procedures listed in their school plans. If their plans don't include accountability procedures for this type of situation, suggest that the groups record this as a "lesson learned" and address it when they return to their districts.