

ASPR TRACIE Technical Assistance Request

Request Receipt Date (by ASPR TRACIE): 29 August 2019

Response Date: 6 September 2019

Type of TA Request: Complex

Request:

The requestor asked for guidance resources specific to the level of screening needed by first receivers using Level C personal protective equipment (PPE) for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) decontamination.

Response:

ASPR TRACIE reviewed existing resources; namely those in its [Hospital Patient Decontamination](#) and [Responder Safety and Health](#) Topic Collections. We also reached out to several members of the ASPR TRACIE Subject Matter Expert (SME) Cadre for their input.

I. General Information/ Considerations

ASPR TRACIE found a reference to “mandatory exams for personnel expected to wear Level C PPE” in the October 27, 2016 Department of Veterans Affairs [VHA Directive 0320.06 6](#), which may be applicable to the requestor. The reference indicates the information can be found in the Employee Occupational Health Guidebook on the website of the Center for Engineering and Occupational Safety and Health. Unfortunately, this website is no longer active and ASPR TRACIE was unable to locate a publicly available version of this Guidebook.

The most relevant resource to the request is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) [Best Practices for Hospital-Based First Receivers of Victims from Mass Casualty Incidents Involving the Release of Hazardous Materials](#). Appendix H of this document includes three examples of medical monitoring procedures for first receivers. Appendix I includes two checklists for vital signs monitoring for first receivers.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has collected [Examples of Pre-deployment Screening Tools Used by Selected Emergency Response Units](#). This document provides examples of and links to pre-deployment responder health screening tools used by select emergency response units. While targeted toward responders rather than receivers, these examples may be helpful in determining screening elements.

While not focused on decontamination, California’s Division of Occupational Safety and Health has adopted its own [Aerosol Transmissible Diseases](#) standard. This standard is applicable in California workplaces including hospitals and clinics where there may be a high risk of infectious disease transmission via inhalation of air containing viruses, bacteria, or other organisms. Appendix B includes a [Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire](#) that should be used by employers who do not use the questionnaire included in the state’s [Respiratory Protection Standard](#).

II. ASPR TRACIE SME Cadre Member Comments

Please note: These are direct quotes or paraphrased comments from emails and other correspondence provided by ASPR TRACIE SME Cadre members in response to this specific request. They do not necessarily express the views of ASPR or ASPR TRACIE.

SME Cadre Member 1:

- Despite a lot of personal opinions, there are no OSHA requirements for first receivers as far as screening is concerned. There are requirements for on-site responders using higher levels of protection under Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER).
- At my institution, we require that personnel participate in the respiratory protection program. We ensure they are approved to wear the devices, in general good health, and complete their eight-hour operations training (including safe wearing of PPE and being in PPE) and refresher training.
- Prior to donning the PPE, we have the decontamination team leader ensure that personnel are in good health.
- Following their decontamination activities, we conduct a medical screening exam including vitals if they were using powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) or suits.
- Some institutions have elected to do a medical screening and vital signs prior to PPE use. However, we do not do that.

SME Cadre Member 2:

- A best practice is the conduct of a vital screening before and after suiting up.
- The length of time in the suits would be dependent on the environment. In a non-regulated environment with heat, the time frame in a suit decreases as the heat rises. In turn, the heat will have an effect on the individuals in the suits. The recommended work time allowance is found in [Table 8-10](#) of OSHA's Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Manual for Hazardous Waste Site Activities.