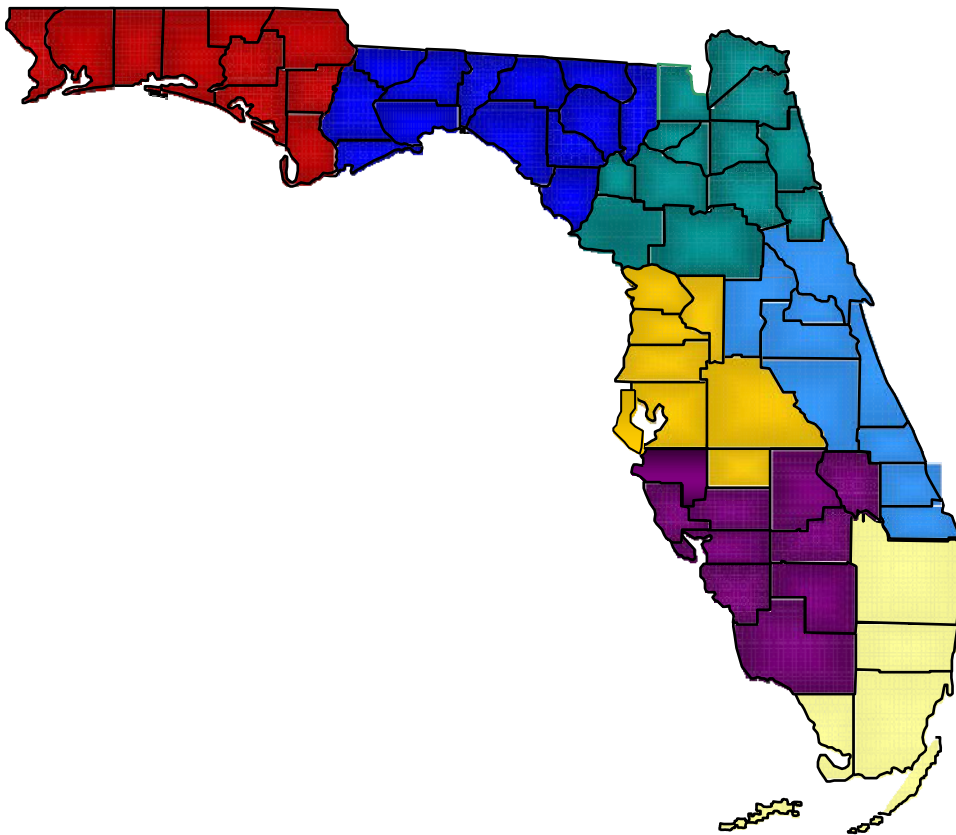


# **Response to Suspicious Substance Incidents: Essential Elements Standard Operations Guideline**



**Approved by the Domestic Security Oversight Council**  
November 3, 2021

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. DOCUMENT INSTRUCTIONS.....	3
About the Authoring Entity .....	4
Instructions for Use .....	5
II. REFERENCES .....	6
III. INTRODUCTION.....	7
IV. BACKGROUND .....	7
V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	8
VI. PURPOSE.....	8
VII. STATUTES .....	8
VIII. THREAT .....	9
IX. JURISDICTION.....	9
X. STEP ONE: INITIAL NOTIFICATION .....	10
Recommended Review Actions.....	10
XI. STEP TWO: SCENE ASSESSMENT .....	10
Recommended Review Actions.....	10
XII. STEP THREE: HAZMAT OR FIRE /RESCUE RESPONSE.....	11
Recommended Review Actions.....	12
XIII. STEP FOUR: SCENE AND RESPONDER NOTIFICATION.....	12
Recommended Review Actions.....	12
XIV. STEP FIVE: SAMPLE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS .....	13
Recommended Review Actions.....	13
XV. STEP SIX: PUBLIC INFORMATION .....	14
Recommended Review Actions.....	14
XVI. MANAGEMENT OF EXPOSED PERSONS .....	14
Recommended Review Actions.....	14
XVII. RESPONSE PROCESS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS .....	15
XVIII. APPENDICES .....	16

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## I. DOCUMENT INSTRUCTIONS

**Document Title:** “Guideline: RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

**Replacement:** This document replaces the RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS “POWDER” INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS, dated June 11, 2013

**Handling Instructions:** FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO) This information is considered confidential and exempt from Florida Statute 119.07(1) and Section 24(a), art. 1 of the Florida Constitution (The Sunshine Law)

**Document Owner/Author:** Florida’s Domestic Security Coordinating Group Planning, Response, and Recovery Focus Group

**Authorizing Entities:**

Florida’s Domestic Security Coordinating Group Planning, Response, and Recovery Focus Group as approved on August 18, 2021.

Florida’s Domestic Security Coordinating Group Executive Board as approved on October 12, 2021.

Florida’s Domestic Security Oversight Council as approved on November 3, 2021.

**Authority:** Guideline issued/approved in accordance with *Duties of the Domestic Security Oversight Council*: Florida Statutes 943.0313 (5.a.4-6, and 9-11).

**Audience:** This guideline was written to assist each agency with a role or responsibility in response to a suspicious substance incident within the State of Florida.

**Purpose:** This guideline was developed as a means to address interagency response process concerns. It attempts to help promote the conduct of a consistent, safe, effective multi-discipline response to suspicious substance incidents.

**Usage Requirement:** Usage is voluntary; the authoring entity has no authority to mandate use of this guideline. It is, however, recommended that agencies incorporate the elements contained within; as they were written to overcome concerns related to existing response processes.

**Scope:** This document is only applicable within Florida. It does not attempt to address all facets of response to this hazard. It only includes certain elements essential for interagency inclusion, process coordination and safety. *This document does not constitute a complete response plan.* It provides elements for insertion into response plans.

# **RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS**

## **About the Authoring Entity**

The Domestic Security Coordinating Group (DSCG) is made up of representatives from the seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces (RDSTFs), designated urban areas and other key agency liaisons that come together by function (planning, training, etc.) to address domestic security issues surfaced by the RDSTFs or the Domestic Security Oversight Council (DSOC).

The DSCG Planning, Response, and Recovery Focus Group helps to provide statewide leadership and guidance to agencies (as requested), specialty teams, and the RDSTFs to help ensure that operational plans developed in Florida for domestic security related responses form an integrated basis for preparedness, response, and recovery operations. Members engage in domestic security related plan development (or review) that is collaborative, integrated, and focused on interagency operations within the State of Florida.

DSCG Planning, Response, and Recovery Focus Group provides information and recommendations to Florida's Chief of Domestic Security and the DSOC relating to counter terrorism and domestic security efforts.

Upon DSCG Executive Board approval, recommendations are submitted to DSOC.

DSOC serves as an advisory council pursuant to F.S. 20.03(7) to provide guidance to the seven RDSTFs and other domestic security working groups.

Per F.S. 943.0313 (5.a.4-6, and 9-11) the duties of DSOC applicable to this document are:

Review and recommend approval of statewide policies and operational protocols that support the domestic security efforts of the regional domestic security task forces and state agencies.

Review the overall statewide effectiveness of domestic security and counterterrorism efforts in order to provide suggestions to improve or enhance those efforts.

Review the efforts of any agency or entity involved in state or local domestic security and counter-terrorism efforts that requests assistance or that appears to need such review in order to provide suggestions to improve or enhance those efforts.

Upon DSOC approval, the guidance is promoted statewide through each of the seven RDSTFs.

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## Instructions for Use

Each agency and region is asked to review the essential elements in this guideline and incorporate them into local and regional suspicious substance response plans, procedures, or processes.

If none currently exist, it is suggested that each county develop their own Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and incorporate these elements as part of the basic framework.

Each element contained within this document arose out of a need for interagency coordination and identification of a suggested process to meet the needs of each of the disciplines and entities involved.

By incorporating the essential elements into the framework of local response and in regional assistance, each agency or region will have made great strides in enacting a process that meets the needs of its response partners. This will hopefully translate into a more safe and efficient response to a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or threat thereof.

Please note, this document does not attempt to address all facets of response to this hazard. It only includes certain elements essential for interagency inclusion, process, coordination, and safety. *This document does not constitute a complete response plan.* It provides elements for insertion into response plans.

Please note, it is recognized that communities will have different resources available at their disposal, therefore in some cases the guideline simply states what must be accomplished and leaves the "How" and "By whom" to local processes to allow for local or regional variations. Please inform your RDSTF staff of these local processes, so that regional variations can be identified.

Please also provide any feedback on this Guideline through your RDSTF staff for submission back to the DSCG Planning, Response, and Recovery Focus Group.

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## II. REFERENCES (links provided in Appendix A)

1. Title 18, US Code 175 - Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Statute of 1989
2. Title 18, US Code 2332 - Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction Statute
3. Title 18, US Code 1038 - False Information and Hoaxes
4. Title 18, US Code 831 - Prohibited Transactions Involving Nuclear Materials
5. Title 22, US Code 75 - Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation
6. Title XVII, FS 252.351 *Reporting requirements to the State Watch Office*
7. Title XLVI, FS 790.166 *Weapons of Mass Destruction*
8. H.R. 3448, Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002
9. FBI, DHS, HHS/CDC Coordinated Document *Guidance on Initial Response to a Suspicious Letter/Container with a Potential Biological Threat*
10. Florida State Emergency Response Commission Model Procedure for Public Safety Sampling for Hazardous Material/WMD Incidents
11. International Association of Fire Chiefs *Model Procedures for Responding to a Package with Suspicion of a Biological Agent*
12. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
13. State of Florida Chemical, Biological and Radiological Incident Resource Guide for Responding Laboratories, Version 18
14. State of Florida Biological Incident Annex Version 5
15. FDOH Protocol for Suspected Biological Agent Collection, Packaging, & Transport

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## III. INTRODUCTION

This guideline provides basic elements that should be incorporated into local or regional procedures pertaining to response to suspicious letters, containers or packages in which Biological Agent involvement is an initial concern.

## IV. BACKGROUND

Since October 2001, the CDC and state and local public health authorities have been investigating cases of bioterrorism-related anthrax. Following these investigations this guideline was established.

Although no other dissemination of *Bacillus anthracis*, also known as Anthrax, was made in 2001 other than through US mail, individual citizens began to fear not only their mail but substances found within their home and/or work environment. This reaction created the necessity to construct the framework for managing citizen calls that occur to this day, albeit in a much-reduced capacity.

Following the 2001 *Bacillus anthracis* disseminations, each region and its subsequent counties employed varied procedures and protocols although no global guiding document existed. In retrospect, associated with the handling, processing, chain of custody, and notification procedures related to a few incidents, the desired path fell short of the global goals of all stakeholders. To that end, in 2009, a protocol was developed to address some of these concerns.

While the 2009 protocol was accepted by the former RDSTF State Working Group (SWG), it was widely recognized as having the similar issues as its independent predecessors and for those reasons, was not widely accepted.

In 2011, the SWG began a process to revisit construction of a documentation reflecting the goals of all stakeholders. The end product of that endeavor resulted in a Standard Operations Guideline. The context of the guidance is to be used to aid each region and county in their development of their own CONOPS. Its use in that manor will enable each geographical area to utilize its resources efficiently to meet the basic tenets required for proper notification, investigation, collection, transport, and communication to ensure both chain of custody and appropriate reporting by all responders involved in these efforts.

This guideline is released with the global goal that response protocols across the state be consistent. Its content is based upon related guidance endorsed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Homeland Security, the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

In 2021, The DSCG Planning, Response and Recovery Focus Group established an ad hoc group to revisit the guideline. The end result was the revised version of the Response to Suspicious Substance Incidents: Essential Elements, a Standard Operations Guideline.

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2013 guideline was written in coordination with a panel consisting of local law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency medical services, Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, US Postal Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the State Emergency Response Team.

This revised guideline draft was provided for further distribution and comment to the DSCG Planning, Response, and Recovery Focus Group, FBI, Florida Department of Health, Florida Division of Emergency Management, Florida Fusion Center, and internally by other associated agencies.

To prepare this guideline, a series of conference calls covering the areas of a typical response were held. For each section reviewed the committee members from relevant disciplines invited additional personnel to participate in the review and make comments. This mechanism allowed each response agency to involve a larger sample of personnel and make better use of their time.

## VI. PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to establish a procedural framework for coordinated responses to suspicious substances, powders, letters, or packages that are found and are of primary concern. With the divergent structure of Florida's counties, and their attendant response capabilities, each county must adapt their policies to fit their personnel. However, it is imperative that this framework maintains appropriate safeguards for managing these incidents. This guidance develops operational parameters to employ in managing a response to suspicious substances. Specifically, it describes a Hazardous Materials (HazMat), law enforcement, and public health coordinated response. At the end of each response section, there are **Recommended Review Actions**.

It is anticipated partners with the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces will receive feedback on an annual basis, through a survey and/or perform an After-Action Review (**see Appendix B for templates**).

## VII. STATUTES

There are statutes at both the federal and state level concluding that use or threatened use of a biological agent is a criminal act. While hoax letters do not pose a direct physical hazard, they cause psychological trauma to recipients and result in a significant diversion of law enforcement and public safety resources.

Hoax threats are actively investigated, when caught, the perpetrator is prosecuted facing a maximum sentence of five years' incarceration. Statutory references are provided at the beginning of this guideline.



# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## VIII. THREAT

The actual preparation of a biological agent for dissemination is difficult without sophisticated training and laboratory equipment. Creation of these agents in powdered or stable form can be done outside the laboratory environs but again the process is quite complex.

Since the initial attacks in 2001, there have been no attacks using a pathogenic agent. One major mailing to the Planned Parenthood system used a non-pathogenic *Bacillus* species; however, this mailing constitutes a threat under current law and statutes. There have been several ricin incidents, properly more a toxin than traditional “pathogen” though. Ricin incidents is still far more prevalent.

Since 2001, the v a r i o u s targets for use or threatened use of a biological agent include, elected officials, controversial organizations, the media, county and state offices, and law enforcement. This creates a jurisdictional and communications issue that requires additional response considerations.

Historically, a common issue is multiple mailings from a single source of a hoax letter. These multiple mailings have crossed county and/or state lines. In this regard, the Florida Fusion Center should disseminate the extent of the hoax mailing to assure that all local jurisdictions are aware of the activity. Federal rules and statutes still apply in these cases. At this time, the Florida Fusion Center located in Tallahassee has the only 24/7 operational capability and should be the coordinating regional fusion centers for this activity.

In a known threat scenario, the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and the FBI WMD Coordinator (WMDC) will be initiating and conducting investigations and assessments with local law enforcement in accordance with their current guidelines.

A high threat level and/or receipt of credible intelligence related to a potential or actual suspicious substance or package will most certainly heighten the consideration of strategies for response, public protection and notification, decontamination and prophylactic treatment of victims. However, the basic approach to evaluating an incident involving the presence of a suspicious substance or package should be no different than an incident void of a specific threat.

## IX. JURISDICTION

Because a threat, use, or hoax referencing a biological agent is a criminal act, a law enforcement officer with training coordinated through the RDSTF must respond to each report of a suspicious substance and assess the scene in the context of the law enforcement response policy. The guideline should, however, identify the local law enforcement capabilities.

The use, threat, or hoax of a biological agent automatically escalates the jurisdiction to a federal crime and the law enforcement officer at the scene must promptly notify the FBI WMDC when these circumstances are present. The WMDC will work the investigation jointly with state and local partners to achieve the law enforcement goals.

The FDEM State Watch Office must be notified. The notification to the FDEM State Watch Office will allow mutual aid from other jurisdictions to respond.

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## X. STEP ONE: INITIAL NOTIFICATION

The guideline should establish that any point of contact receiving a notification call will transfer the caller to the 911 operators who are trained in using the assessment tool. Typically, the suspicious substance incident begins with a call to 911. The 911 Call Center Operators should ascertain a description of the suspicious substance, and the context of the incident.

After completion of the assessment tool, the call operator should dispatch law enforcement to the scene. A copy of the information should be transmitted to the responding law enforcement. Any suspicious substance could be considered a crime, and several first responders will respond.

The operator receiving the call should notify the County Warning point and County Emergency Management if distinct. The County Warning Point or designee must then notify the State Watch Office. **(See Appendix D)**

### **Recommended Review Actions**

1. Call operator has shown competency to handle these types of calls
2. Call operator completes the assessment tool
3. Assessment tool sent to the law enforcement dispatched to the scene
4. County Warning Point and Emergency Management (if separate) notified
5. FDEM State Watch Office notified
6. County Health Department and/or Regional Emergency Response Advisor notified
7. FBI notified according to local guideline

## XI. STEP TWO: SCENE ASSESSMENT

The first arriving law enforcement officer assesses the scene in accordance with known intelligence, the threat table, and guidance from supervisors in order to determine if this is a high-risk situation. It is important to have the least amount of law enforcement entering the scene, to avoid unnecessary contamination. Law enforcement will need to establish the area of risk and identify the person(s) potentially exposed. If this is a high-risk situation, the FDLE Regional Operations Center should be contacted for assistance.

It is known that there are municipalities that have specifically identified law enforcement personnel appropriately trained and equipped in HazMat scene entry to assist and or perform a Unified Command response. These city or county operations should add a potential review of the safety considerations after each incident.

### **Recommended Review Actions**

1. If Law Enforcement enters the scene, they must have proper personal protective equipment (PPE). (only for selected counties)
2. Law Enforcement officer makes correct assessment of the scene
3. Law Enforcement officer has identified all potential persons exposed.

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## XII. STEP THREE: HAZMAT OR FIRE /RESCUE RESPONSE

All suspicious substance incidents should be considered a HazMat response. The absence or presence of a biological agent may be the cause of the initial dispatch, but other factors may enter into the incident. HazMat should be the primary responders from the fire service to these incidents, as they have the appropriate response capabilities. However, in situations such as the 2001 incidents, the number of incidents may overwhelm the abilities of the HazMat teams to respond. This is exacerbated by the HazMat teams serving multiple counties.

Fire rescue responders, who have appropriate PPE may enter the scene, observe conditions, and assist law enforcement with situational assessment. Evidence collection, preservation, and chain-of-custody are essential. Further, fire rescue responders can assess exposed persons and assist with decontamination, if appropriate. Responding agencies that lack the appropriate materials and/or equipment to field screen the package as outlined should request the assistance of appropriate responders.

All packages must be collected in compliance with the FDOH sample collection form screening and packaging requirements. **(See Appendix C)**

HazMat has the responsibility for packaging the product in a secure manner for transport to the FDOH Laboratory Response Network (LRN) State Laboratory. It is the responsibility of the FDOH Regional Emergency Response Advisor (RERA), or designee, to ensure the sample has been packaged correctly and the required documentation accompanies the sample. This may include evidence chain-of-custody forms. The RERAs carry appropriate materials that can be provided on scene for proper packaging of the field sample. **THE LABORATORY WILL NOT ACCEPT PACKAGES WITHOUT THIS STEP.**

The RERA should be utilized as the primary method of the sample transport to the FDOH LRN State Laboratory. All samples are to be taken to the FDOH LRN State Laboratory. Each sample should be packaged in accordance with established FDOH LRN protocols for these instances. In addition, the use of FDOH LRN submission forms will be used. **(See Appendix C)**

Transportation to the FDOH LRN State Laboratory for the jurisdiction may require the use of one or more designated individuals from a variety of agencies. FDOH RERAs are one of the primary methods in the State. However, if they are unavailable, alternate processes, to include law enforcement, can be identified for safe transport.

The FDOH RERA or designee notifies the laboratory of jurisdiction prior to departure for the approximate arrival time of the sample.

If responders at the scene agree that this is an obvious non-hazardous source of a substance and the law enforcement officer at the scene concludes there is no threat, real or hoax, present, no further action is taken. The substance can be disposed following the appropriate policy.

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## **Recommended Review Actions**

1. HazMat is dispatched to scene, if available
2. If fire rescue is responding, PPE recommendations are established and equipment is available for use and used properly
3. Package is secured for transport in accordance with approved FDOH LRN sample collection protocols
4. FDOH LRN submission forms completed appropriately
5. Package is assessed for radiological or explosives
6. Chain of custody forms are completed
7. Transport guidelines for the region have been followed
8. Laboratory is notified of impending transport of evidence

## **XIII. STEP FOUR: SCENE AND RESPONDER NOTIFICATION**

Based upon the scene assessment and other pertinent information, the on-scene law enforcement officer determines:

- Whether or not there is an actual threat situation present
- Whether or not the number of possible contaminated persons have been potentially contaminated with a harmful substance
- Whether or not the circumstances at the scene require additional investigative or other resources

At this point, if deemed necessary additional resources may be dispatched through the county's existing dispatch system. However, in all cases, the FBI WMDC and the FDLE Regional Operations Center must be notified even if no additional support is required.

The Incident Commander or designee will notify the FDEM State Watch Office specific to the impacted area of the response for inclusion in their reporting chain.

This step is required as multiple mailings, to different areas from the same source, can then be matched and investigations coordinated. The level of the scene may then, under Incident Command System principles, be expanded. If the facility is under the jurisdiction of the US Postal Service, their postal inspection service and protocols will supersede this guideline.

## **Recommended Review Actions**

1. Scene assessment is accurate to the level of involvement and need of additional resources
2. FBI and FDLE personnel are notified of the incident and the on-scene determination of threat status
3. If the scene is a threat, Unified Command is established with FBI in lead role
4. Incident Commander or designee notifies FDEM State Watch Office in the impacted area of response

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## XIV. STEP FIVE: SAMPLE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

HazMat determines the level of PPE to be worn by the sample collection team corresponding with the threat assessment.

These incidents are essentially a HazMat response. However, these incidents require close coordination with law enforcement to limit contamination while safeguarding evidence and preserving the crime scene.

HazMat is responsible for field screening, collection of the sample, and preparation for transport by the identified personnel for the area. Every local protocol should align with this guideline.

Determination of the presence of a biological agent can only be done by the FDOH LRN State Laboratory. This sample takes precedence over all other sampling being done in the field by HazMat technicians.

No field-testing kits are certified to be used in place of laboratory testing of the sample. After the FDOH LRN sample has been secured for transport, at the discretion of the Incident Commander or designee, it must be consistent with the intelligence and the context of the incident. Additionally, biological field screening may be conducted on the remaining product by trained and certified HazMat technicians. The results of this field screening may be used to make decisions concerning the extent of the contamination, decontamination areas, and the need to isolate the scene.

Results from the tests should NOT be used to initiate collection of clinical samples or the prophylaxis of exposed persons. Data needs to be collected on all persons who meet the definition of exposed and should be documented for future contact should the need arise. In any statement or transmission of the results of a field test kit result, it should be clearly written or stated "unconfirmed". **See Appendix A number 13** for further information on "unconfirmed."

### **Recommended Review Actions**

1. HazMat collects samples in accordance with FDOH LRN approved sample collection protocol
2. Laboratory transport is conducted in accordance with the local protocol
3. Laboratory confirms sample meets all entry criteria as being screened for hazards
4. Field test kits are used with knowledge of their limitations and certification
5. Proper labeling of a field test as "unconfirmed"

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## XV. STEP SIX: PUBLIC INFORMATION

As we move more into the social media purview, this section is new to the guideline. Historically, citizens performing “field reporting” have initiated a media response that has gotten to the scene faster than the response teams or personnel. Given that this phenomenon is more likely to increase rather than decrease, the local protocol should include contacting the Public Information Officer (PIO) or joint information center being utilized.

The joint information center will establish a media area following the Incident Command Structure (ICS).

### **Recommended Review Actions**

1. PIO is contacted by the Incident Commander
2. PIO responds to the scene in a timely manner
3. PIO releases information approved by the Incident Commander

## XVI. MANAGEMENT OF EXPOSED PERSONS

At the outset of a suspicious substance response, the key component is identification of ALL potentially exposed persons to the products. Valid and accurate contact information is essential as a result will not be immediately available to them.

Unless an individual has been physically injured or has a condition that the incident has exacerbated (i.e. heart condition), there is no need for transport to a hospital for evaluation. If persons have been contaminated by the substance, decontamination should occur and fire-rescue should be responsible for this evaluation to determine the level and means of decontamination procedures.

Upon arrival at the FDOH LRN State Laboratory, the sample will be tested using PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) technology. A positive PCR will initiate the laboratory to contact the local county health department for administration of appropriate countermeasures. These incidents generate varying level of concern to those who are potentially exposed. The local guideline should recognize this potentiality and have established capability to activate appropriate behavioral health personnel to assist.

### **Recommended Review Actions**

1. Incident command has a documented list of all exposed persons with valid contact information
2. Decontamination procedures (if applicable) have been affected on all persons requiring same prior to scene exit
3. Potentially exposed persons have a clear understanding of the time frames for PCR confirmation and have a point of contact for their concerns
4. If applicable, behavioral health assets are deployed to assist with the exposed persons

# RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE INCIDENTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

## XVII. RESPONSE PROCESS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Florida Standard Operations Guideline for Response to Suspicious Substance Incidents: Essential Elements provides official guidance to the 67 counties within the state to respond to a variety of event types. While differences in structure, capabilities, and capacity exist among the 67 counties, no more than 10 variations of a comparative structure based on capabilities shall be needed.

In each of these sections pertaining to the response, there are **Recommended Review Actions**. After the county has established their response capability, it should be measured against the recommended actions for achieving compliance.

Regional Variations: Each RDSTF can choose to either promote this as regional guidance or develop a regional variation adapted to the conditions present within the region. All regional documents should be posted to the RDSTF SharePoint site.

It is anticipated partners with the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces will receive feedback on an annual basis, through a survey (**see Appendix B for survey template**). This survey shall be maintained in the RDSTF SharePoint site under the DSCG Planning, Response and Recovery FG and with the RDSTF Planner. Additionally, local, state, and federal agencies can perform an After-Action Review (AAR) on the suspicious substance response and provide the report to the DSCG Planning, Response and Recovery FG and with the RDSTF Planner to be uploaded to the RDSTF SharePoint site (**see Appendix B for AAR template**).

## APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

1. Title 18, US Code 175 - Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Statute of 1989
2. Title 18, US Code 2332 - Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction Statute
3. Title 18, US Code 1038 - False information and hoaxes
4. Title 18, US Code 831 - Prohibited transactions involving nuclear materials
5. Title 22, US Code 75 - Chemical weapons convention implementation,  
<https://uscode.house.gov/>
  
6. Title XVII, FS 252.351 *Reporting requirements to the State Watch Office*
7. Title XLVI, FS 790.166 *Weapons of mass destruction*  
<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/>
  
8. H.R. 3448, Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/3448>
  
9. FBI, DHS, HHS/CDC Coordinated Document *Guidance on Initial Response to a Suspicious Letter/Container with a Potential Biological Threat*  
<https://www.emergency.cdc.gov/planning/pdf/suspicious-package-biothreat.pdf>
  
10. Florida State Emergency Response Commission Model Procedure for Public Safety Sampling for Hazardous Material/WMD Incidents\_  
<SERCHazardousMaterialsTechnicianStudentTaskBook.pdf> (myfloridacfo.com)
  
11. International Association of Fire Chiefs *Model Procedures for Responding to a Package with Suspicion of a Biological Agent*  
<Model Procedures for Responding to a Package with Suspicion of a Biological Threat> (iafc.org)
  
12. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov))
  
13. State of Florida Chemical, Biological and Radiological Incident Resource Guide for Responding Laboratories, Version 18 (Contact FDOH LRN State Laboratory for document)
  
14. State of Florida Biological Incident Annex Version 5 ([www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org))
  
15. FDOH Protocol for Suspected Biological Agent Collection, Packaging, & Transport Document (Contact you FDOH Regional Emergency Response Advisor or Florida Department of Health ([floridahealth.gov](http://floridahealth.gov)))



**APPENDIX B: AFTER-ACTION REVIEW AND SURVEY TEMPLATES**

**Suspicious Substance After Action Review**

Action	Location of Event	Incident Date	Rev. Date	Met Y/N	Not Met Y/N	N/A	Comments
<b>INITIAL NOTIFICATION</b>							
1) Call Operator completes the assessment tool							
2) Assessment tool sent to law enforcement dispatched to the scene							
3) Call taker has shown competency to handle these types of calls							
4) County Warning Point and Emergency Management (if separate) notified							
5) FDEM State Watch Office is notified							
6) FBI notified according to local guideline							
<b>SCENE ASSESSMENT</b>							
1) If Law Enforcement enters the scene, they have properly protective PPE. (only for selected counties)							
2) Law Enforcement officer makes correct assessment of the scene							
3) Law Enforcement officer has identified all potential persons exposed							
<b>HAZMAT OR FIRE RESCUE RESPONSE</b>							
1) HazMat is dispatched to scene if available							
2) If Fire-Rescue is responding, PPE recommendations are established and equipment is available for use and used properly							

Action	Location of Event	Incident Date	Rev. Date	Met Y/N	Not Met Y/N	N/A	Comments
3) Package is secured for transport in accordance with approved FDOH laboratory sample collection protocols							
4) FDOH lab submission forms completed appropriately							
5) Package is assessed for corrosives, radiological, or explosives							
6) Chain of custody forms are completed							
7) Transport guidelines for the region have been followed							
8) Laboratory is notified of impending transport of evidence							
<b>SCENE AND RESPONDER NOTIFICATION</b>							
1) Scene assessment is accurate as to the level of involvement of additional personnel							
2) FBI and FDLE personnel are notified of the incident and determination							
3) If scene is any threat, Unified Command is established with FBI in lead role							
4) Incident Commander notifies FDEM State Watch Office in the area of response							
<b>SAMPLE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS</b>							
1) HazMat teams collected samples in accordance with approved sample collection protocol							
2) Lab transport is conducted in accordance with the local protocol							

3) Lab confirms sample meets all entry criteria as being screened for hazards							
<b>Action</b>	<b>Location of Event</b>	<b>Incident Date</b>	<b>Rev. Date</b>	<b>Met Y/N</b>	<b>Not Met Y/N</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4) Field test kits are used with knowledge of their limitations							
5) No communication error occurred by labeling a field test as "Confirmed"							
<b>PUBLIC INFORMATION</b>							
1) PIO is contacted by the field Incident Commander							
2) PIO responds to the scene in a timely manner							
3) PIO releases information approved by the Incident Commander							
<b>MANAGEMENT OF EXPOSED PERSONS</b>							
1) The Command team has a documented list of all exposed persons with valid contact information							



Comments:

---

Please rate the response from federal agencies (i.e. FBI, US Postmaster)

Informative?  Yes |  No

Prompt and efficient?  Yes |  No

Comments:

---

Were the Recommended Review Actions:

Informative?  Yes |  No

Prompt and efficient?  Yes |  No

Comments:

---

**APPENDIX C**

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott Arivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**DOMESTIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE SUBMISSION FORM – BIOLOGICAL**

**Sample Information:**

Case/Alarm Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
County: \_\_\_\_\_  
Collection Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Incident address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Targeted individual's name (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Sample description:  Bulk powder     Letter/envelope     Swab     Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter/package opened (if applicable)     no     yes     n/a

**POC for agency collecting sample:**

(agency) \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) \_\_\_\_\_

**POC for agency transporting sample:**

(agency) \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) \_\_\_\_\_

<i>For Laboratory Use Only</i>			
Lab	Sample	ID	Number: _____
DASH Number:		_____	
Other ID Number:		_____	

**ALL SAMPLES MUST BE SCREENED BEFORE SUBMISSION TO THE LABORATORY**

**Field Hazard Screens performed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Explosives/Energetics     negative    Test(s) used: \_\_\_\_\_  
\*Chemical Hazard     negative    Test(s) used: \_\_\_\_\_  
\*Radiological Hazard     negative    Test(s) used: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Laboratory will only accept samples screened negative for the above hazards.**

**Credible Threat Assessment Criteria:**

Stated or implied threat     no     yes    describe \_\_\_\_\_  
Visible substance     no     yes    describe \_\_\_\_\_  
Uncertain or suspicious origin     no     yes    describe \_\_\_\_\_  
Person or persons exposed     no     yes    approximate number \_\_\_\_\_

**Collection Site Information:**

Building evacuated     no     yes    Building closed     no     yes

**NOTIFICATIONS:**

Notification made to BT Coordinator at LRN Reference Lab (see page 3 for contact information)

By whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Notification made to County/City Warning Point

By whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS:**

**In order to ensure timely notification, please provide contact information for someone with 24/7 availability, who will be responsible for disseminating results to other local agencies.**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_    **WORK NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**24/7 TELEPHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_    **FAX NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**AGENCY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**AGENCY ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM

**NOTE: SAMPLE WILL BE DISCARDED 30 DAYS AFTER TESTING UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED**

Responder Incident Report attached:     no     yes

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## DOMESTIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE SUBMISSION FORM – BIOLOGICAL

### Instructions for Submitting Samples for Biological Agent Testing

#### Environmental Samples:

1. Will be accepted by the state laboratory only after law enforcement and HazMat have performed their assessment to screen for radiological, explosive and chemical hazards.
2. Only suspected samples such as swabs, powder, contaminated paper, letters or liquid should be submitted for testing. Samples should be double-bagged and put in a container no larger than a one-gallon paint can (preferred container). Sample submission form must be completed and accompany the sample. **Please do not place the completed submission form in the paint can with the sample.**
3. Extraneous materials such as gloves, towels, and clothing **must not** be included with the samples. Extraneous materials should be placed in a biohazard bag and disposed of locally according to state and federal guidelines.

### Instructions for Completing This Form

- Targeted Individual:** The person to whom the letter/package was addressed.
- Sample description:** Please check the word which best describes the sample, i.e. Bulk powder, Letter/Envelope, Swab, Other (please describe).
- POC for agency collecting sample:** Print the name of the agency, the point of contact for that agency, and cell number.
- POC for agency transporting sample:** Print the name of the agency, the point of contact for that agency, and cell number.
- Field Hazard Screens:** **All samples must be screened before submission to the laboratory. At a minimum, this includes:**
- Explosives – X-ray required for unopened packages**  
Colorimetric test
  - Chemicals –** Screen for corrosives, oxidizing agents, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
  - Radiological –** Direct alpha and beta survey
- Notification of Results:** **Print name and contact information for the individual who should receive notification of results as soon as laboratory testing is completed (24/7). This person should accept responsibility for disseminating results to other agencies involved in the incident.**
- Signature / Date / Time:** Signature of individual delivering sample.
- Responder Incident Report Attached:** Has the Responding Agency attached an incident report to the sample submission form?

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## DOMESTIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE SUBMISSION FORM – BIOLOGICAL

### LRN Reference Laboratory Contact Information

The following Department of Health laboratories can accept environmental samples for biological testing. After hours telephone: 1-866-FLA-LABS (1-866-352-5227)

**Department of Health**

***Bureau of Public Health Laboratories – Jacksonville***

1217 Pearl Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Deliveries can be accepted at any time (24/7) by the **BT COORDINATOR**.

**Call: (904) 945-4415 or (904) 637-9260.**

**Department of Health**

***Bureau of Public Health Laboratories – Tampa***

3602 Spectrum Boulevard  
Tampa, FL 33612

Deliveries can be accepted at any time (24/7) by the **BT COORDINATOR**.

**Page: (813) 883-5929.**

**Cell phone backup: (813) 956-8853 or (813) 455-9105.**

**Department of Health**

***Bureau of Public Health Laboratories – Miami***

1325 NW 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Miami, FL 33125

Deliveries can be accepted at any time (24/7) by the **BT COORDINATOR**.

**Page: (800) 539-4432.**

**Cell phone backup: (305) 409-9925 or (305) 797-5882.**



## APPENDIX D: STATE WATCH OFFICE



## THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STATE WATCH OFFICE

### State Watch Office Fact Sheet:

<https://www.floridadisaster.org/globalassets/dem/response/operations/state-watch-office-fact-sheet.pdf>

### State Watch Office Contact:

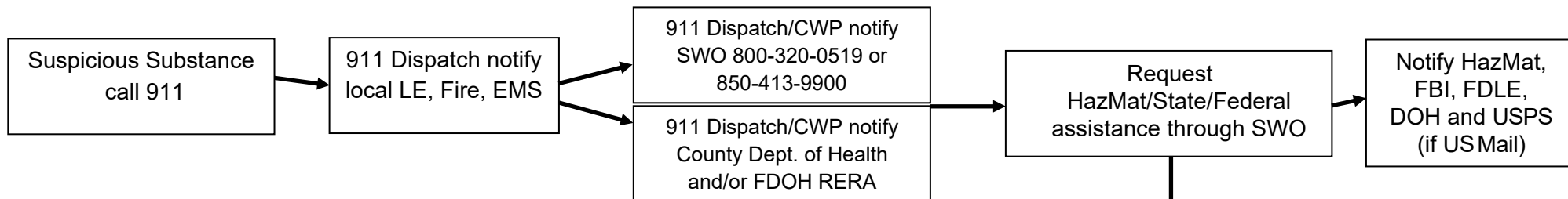
1-800-320-0519 or 850-815-4001

[swp@em.myflorida.com](mailto:swp@em.myflorida.com)

### White Powder Questions for Tracker:

- ✓ **Chemical State:** Powder, Liquid, Solid, etc
- ✓ **Source Container:** Envelope, package, bottle, etc
- ✓ **Total Source Container Volume:** If Known
- ✓ **Quantity Released:** If Known
- ✓ **Released:** Inside Building, Outside.
- ✓ **How Many People Exposed?**
- ✓ **Any Injuries/fatalities?**
- ✓ **Evacuations?**
- ✓ **What Agencies are on scene**
- ✓ **Any unmet needs?**

# Response to a Suspicious Substance Flow Chart



**Region (insert #) Contact Numbers:**

- FDEM SWO: 850-815-4001 or 1-800-320-0519
- FDOH RERA: (Insert regional contact)
- FDLE Supervisor: (Insert regional contact)
- FBI JTTF Special Agent: (Insert regional contact)
- FBI WMD Coordinator: (Insert regional contact)
- FBI 24 Hour Duty Desk: (Insert regional contact)
- HazMat (Insert regional team) Fire Dept.: (Insert regional contact)
- HazMat (Insert regional team) Fire Dept.: (Insert regional contact)
- RDSTF Bomb Squad Regional Coordinator: (Insert regional contact)

**Abbreviations:**  
 CWP- County Warning Point  
 DOH- Department of Health  
 LRN- Laboratory Response Network  
 SWO – State Watch Office  
 RERA- Regional Emergency Response Advisor

