Falmouth Fire-EMS Operating Guideline
Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents

**Objective:** To guide department personnel in recognizing and responding to a hazardous materials incident.

**General Information:**
Every vehicle operated by Falmouth Fire-EMS has a DOT guidebook in the front compartment. This orange book is to be used by first-arriving companies to identify a product using name or number, identify emergency procedures to take, including evacuation zones for small and large spills, fire, etc., and offer initial responder protection criteria. These books are to be used only in the initial stages of a hazmat scene and more details will be needed from other sources (notably Hazmat Teams) as the incident progresses.

CHEMTREC’s phone number is 1-800-424-9300. Their website is:
https://www.chemtrec.com/

**Guidelines:**

**A. Response**

1. The response for a reported hazardous material incident will be a still box and include the district Engine, Tower, Chief/Duty Officer and Ambulance.

2. If conditions warrant, the incident commander may call for additional units, some which may include, the Portland Fire Department Hazmat Team or the Cumberland County Hazmat team as well as additional fire and EMS units.

3. FIRST ARRIVING COMPANY: The officer of the first arriving company must do an initial size up of the incident. Obtain as much information as possible concerning the product involved, hazard of the product, quantity, container type, location, etc. Utilize any help from company personnel, placards, shipping manifest, and material safety data sheets to gain as much information on the hazard as quickly as possible. All information must be relayed to fire alarm. All personnel will wear full protective gear including self contained breathing apparatus during size-up operations.

4. OTHER RESPONDING COMPANIES: All other responding companies shall locate at a safe distance from the incident until instructed to take specific action.

5. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER AGENCIES: The Incident Commander will see that all proper agencies are notified of the incident. Some which may include local and state police, Cumberland County Emergency Management, DEP, EPA, public
utilities, Maine Medical Center and Mercy Hospital. The Incident Commander or his designee will coordinate inter-agency actions.

6. OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE:
   i. CHEMTREC: Available 24 hours a day if their assistance is needed, relay as much correct information as possible pertaining to the incident.

7. USE OF RESOURCE MATERIAL: The incident commander will designate personnel who will be charged with the task of gaining information from all resource material available. The resource material will be used to determine the characteristics, hazards, and properties of the material. Resource material may be found in Unit 1, or online. The Material Safety Data Sheet will also be a vital source of information.

B. Plan of Action

1. Based on the initial size-up and using all information available, the incident commander shall formulate a plan of action for the following:
   i. Safety of citizens
   ii. Safety of department personnel and other agency personnel
   iii. Evacuation of endangered area if necessary
   iv. Control of incident scene
   v. Stabilization of hazardous material
   vi. Removal of hazardous material by appropriate means
   vii. Decontamination of personnel, both civilian and department members
   viii. Medical treatment of exposed people

2. Falmouth Fire-EMS personnel will establish controlled zones around the perimeter of the incident and will contact the County Hazardous Materials team for operations if the chemical involved is beyond the scope of the department’s practice.

3. Falmouth personnel will only serve to control the scene and rescue victims in immediate danger in these types of incidents.

C. Controlled Zones

The Incident Commander will establish and control proper zones for the safety of civilian, fire department personnel and other agency personnel.

1. HOT ZONE: An area where significant contaminated atmosphere exists. All personnel will be evacuated from the area immediately. Access to the hot zone must be rigidly controlled with only those personnel having a specific assignment allowed to enter. All entry and exit must be recorded. No personnel will be allowed to enter the hot zone without full protective equipment, as determined by the product involved. Once a hot zone is established, all entries and exits must be made through one controlled access point. Based on potential danger, the hot zone area should be
determined by such conditions as type and quantity of material involved, time of day, weather conditions, location, and degree of risk to unprotected personnel.

2. RESTRICTED ZONE: The area outside of the Hot Zone where an acceptable level of contamination exists. Only necessary and authorized personnel shall be allowed in this zone. All personnel shall be equipped with full protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus while in this zone. Access to the restricted zone must be controlled at one access point located upwind and uphill from the hot zone.

3. EVACUATION ZONE: An area which, in some cases, may encompass the same area as the restricted zone. At a transportation incident, evacuation may be carried out to a certain radius around a site or may expand to include a path downwind where toxic or flammable gases may have carried. Evacuation will have to be coordinated through police and other agencies.

4. STAGING AREA: All companies not specifically assigned or committed shall report to this area and await further orders. The staging area shall be located a safe distance upwind of the incident.

5. DECONTAMINATION AREA: All persons operating in the hot zone shall be decontaminated prior to leaving this zone. The decontamination of civilians will be carried out.

D. Operational Teams
The basic procedure to be used by a Haz-Mat Response team at an incident shall be as follows:

1. ENTRY TEAM: A two-person entry team, equipped with encapsulated suits and SCBA, shall enter the hot zone for the purpose of rescue, identification of material, spill or leak control, or general assignment.

2. FIRST BACKUP TEAM: A two-person backup team, equipped with encapsulated suits and SCBA shall standby in the restricted zone. The primary function of the backup team shall be to provide immediate assistance or rescue of the entry team in the event of an emergency. A secondary function of the backup team shall be to provide relief for the entry team when prolonged activity in the hot zone is necessary.

3. SECOND BACKUP TEAM: Whenever a backup team enters the hot zone, a second backup team shall be standing by with encapsulated suits and SCBA prior to the first backup team entering the hot zone.

4. EMS SUPPORT: No entry team will enter the hot zone until dedicated EMS personal are on scene to support the team. This is in addition to EMS units that may be on scene treating patients.
E. Other Response Components

1. COMMAND POST: The Command Post shall be established by the Incident Commander a safe location from the incident site. Careful consideration must be given to ensure continued safety from contamination at the Command Post. The location of the Command Post will be dependent on a number of factors, including:
   i. ACCESSIBILITY: Terrain, obstructions, etc. may be limiting factors.
   ii. WIND DIRECTION: The Command Post should preferably be located upwind and uphill from the incident.
   iii. PRACTICALITY: The topography, potential hazards, etc. may limit the location of the Command Post.
   iv. CHECK LIST: A Check List will be established by the Incident Commander and all pertinent data will be recorded and logged as the incident is ongoing.

These guidelines may be changed or altered by the Fire Chief at any time.