



Do you need HAZWOPER training?

There are five levels of training outlined in HAZWOPER. Emergency responders with this training make up a hazardous materials response (HAZMAT) team. The first level of training is the first responder awareness level.

You need HAZWOPER first responder awareness level training if:

- You work in an area where you have a potential to witness or discover an uncontrolled release of a hazardous substance.
- Your response actions will be limited to notifying the proper authorities to initiate emergency response procedures.

Training gives you the ability to decide whether a release is incidental or if it requires an emergency response.

What is a non-emergency (incidental) release of a hazardous substance?

An incidental release:

- Does not pose a significant safety or health hazard to employees in the immediate area or to the employee assigned to clean it up.
- Does not have the potential to become an emergency within a short time frame.
- Is limited in quantity, exposure potential, or toxicity.

For example, if the hazardous substances in the work area are always stored in very small quantities (pint sizes down to test tubes) that do not pose a significant safety and health threat at that volume, then there is a minimal risk of having a release escalate into an emergency. In this setting, incidental releases will generally be the norm, and employees with HazCom training will be able to protect themselves while handling these releases.

What is an emergency (uncontrolled) release of a hazardous substance?

A hazardous substance release requires emergency response if:

- Employees must be evacuated from the area.
- The response comes from outside the immediate release area.
- The release can cause conditions that are immediately dangerous to life and health.
- The release poses a serious threat of fire or explosion.
- The release requires immediate attention because of imminent danger.
- The release may cause high levels of exposure to toxic substances.
- There is uncertainty that the personnel in the work area can handle the severity of the hazard with the available personal protective equipment.
- The situation is unclear or data is lacking on important factors.