

RADIATION EMERGENCIES

- Patient care always takes priority over radiological concerns. Addressing contamination issues should not delay treatment of life-threatening injuries.
- Viable patients are a high priority. Therefore, rapidly extricate, treat and transport those patients who are most critical and likely to survive.
- It is highly unlikely that the levels of radioactivity associated with a contaminated patient would pose a significant health risk to care providers.
- Body substance Isolation Clothing (gloves, gowns, masks, or protective eyewear, shoe protectors and, head cap) are recommended, including 2-3 pair of latex gloves.
- Outside the hot and warm zones N-95 masks, if available are recommended, if not surgical masks should be adequate
- Due to fetal sensitivity to radiation, assign pregnant staff to other duties.

Ambulance Preparation

If time permits, consider the following:

- Avoid using internal and external compartments; work out of mobile kits as much as possible
- Close all internal compartments prior to loading patient
- Cover radio communication microphones with a rubber glove
- Cover floor of ambulance with disposable papers or pads

Victims

- If oxygen is warranted for patient treatment use a non re-breather mask, if patient will tolerate it. Additionally, the mask provides protection from inadvertent facial contamination hazards. An N95 or surgical mask is appropriate to protect pt from inadvertent facial contamination hazards when oxygen is not indicated.
- Frequent glove changes will reduce the spread of contamination, and should be considered prior to handling patient, and patient care adjuncts.
- All medical procedures should be utilized to save an immediate patient. If it is medically necessary to intubate a patient that is contaminated, then do so.
- Change gloves prior to intubation
- Maintain endotracheal tube sterility if possible

Patients with limited or no field decontamination

- Initiate ALS care as necessary
- Keep patient wrapped (cocoon style) as much as possible to minimize the potential for contamination spread.
- Only expose areas to assess and treat
- If necessary, cut and remove the patient's clothing away from the body being careful to avoid contamination to the unexposed skin
- Properly contain all removed clothing by placing it in a sealable bag.
- Continue to reassess and monitor vitals while in route to the appropriate receiving facility
- Contact with patient may result in transfer of contamination; change gloves as necessary

Patients with field decontamination

- Patients with non life-threatening injuries should have field decontamination prior to removal from the hot zone.
- Patient's condition permits a more thorough radiological survey to continued care
 - Conduct a head to toe assessment as the patients injuries warrants
 - Patient's clothing should have been removed within the hot zone. If not keep patient wrapped (cocoon style) as much as possible.
 - Expose patient's injuries for assessing and treating only
 - Contact with patient may result in transfer of contamination; change gloves as necessary