

RADIOLOGICAL AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISASTER RESPONSE

Background:

The release of radiological and/or hazardous materials, whether intentionally or an accident, can pose a risk to health and safety. The release can also cause a mass evacuation in and around the area where the release occurred, or residents may be told to shelter-in-place.

Radiological and Hazardous Material Contamination:

Is the unintended contact and contamination may be:

- **External:** External contamination is that on skin or clothing, from which some can fall or be rubbed off, contaminating other people and objects.

Or

- **Internal:** Internal contamination is unintended radioactive material within the body, which it may enter by ingestion, inhalation, or through breaks in the skin. Once in the body, radioactive material may be transported to various sites (eg, bone marrow), where it continues to emit radiation until it is removed or decays. Internal contamination is more difficult to remove.

In the Event of the Release of Radiological and/or Hazardous Materials:

- Report the incident to authorities immediately.
- Stay away from the area where the spill occurred.
- Cover mouth and nose with a cloth or a surgical face mask.
- Bring pets inside.
- Evacuate if told to do so, and take pets with you.
- Follow the evacuation routes provided by the authorities (short-cuts can potentially place you in more danger).
- Have an emergency “go-kit” on hand. Visit www.72hours.dc.gov to learn how to make a go-kit.
- If told to shelter-in-place, seal house so contaminants cannot enter.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Turn off ventilation systems (cut-off exposure to outside air).
- Stay tuned to the radio or television for updates and instructions from officials.

