

SFHEC25

Decontaminate individuals affected by a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident



Overview

This standard covers the decontamination of individuals who have been contaminated as a result of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident. Decontamination is necessary in order to enable their effective assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 obtain, prepare and wear appropriate personal protective equipment according to the nature of the contamination
- P2 comply fully with all contamination monitoring procedures established within your organisation's Major Incident Plans
- P3 handle and dispose of all wastes in accordance with the procedures designated in your organisation's Major Incident Plans
- P4 work in ways which minimise cross-contamination of contaminated individuals and the surrounding area
- P5 treat the decontamination area and all vehicles and equipment that have been in contact with contaminated individuals as contaminated until the vehicles, equipment and individuals have been monitored and their status confirmed
- P6 seek the prompt advice and intervention of specialist personnel as necessary to bring the level of contamination down below threshold levels for action
- P7 identify any needs for specific medications required during and after an incident to maintain public health
- P8 establish that the individual's condition has been stabilised before beginning decontamination
- P9 explain clearly to the individual:
 - P9.1 your role, responsibilities, accountabilities and scope of practice
 - P9.2 the benefits and risks of the decontamination process
- P10 obtain informed consent, having discussed any issues which the individual may have with the process prior to starting decontamination
- P11 support and reassure individuals who are or become distressed by the process
- P12 respond promptly and appropriately if the individual's condition becomes life threatening at any point during the decontamination procedure
- P13 maintain the individual's privacy and dignity as far as is possible in the constraints of the situation, minimising any unnecessary discomfort
- P14 remove contaminated clothing in such a way as to reduce the risks of spreading contamination from the clothing to the skin and to prevent particle inhalation
- P15 encourage the individual to participate as fully as they are able in the decontamination process
- P16 wash the individual thoroughly using appropriate agents and equipment to remove the contamination
- P17 decontaminate the individual in an efficient sequence, taking due account of any need to clean the face first before applying ventilation equipment

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- P18 where possible, decontaminate personal items of worth and return them to their owner or correctly label and bag them if this is not possible
- P19 ensure the decontaminated individual is transferred to a secure, warm and dry environment for triage as soon as possible
- P20 ensure your safety and that of individuals and staff as appropriate to the situation

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 basic toxicology principles including:
 - K1.1 acute and delayed toxicity
 - K1.2 routes of exposure (inhalation, absorption, ingestion, open wound/injection)
 - K1.3 local and systemic effects of exposure
 - K1.4 dose response as it relates to risk assessment
 - K1.5 the synergistic effects of combined substances
 - K1.6 the relationship of proper decontamination to higher mortality and morbidity
 - K1.7 the alteration of triage principles as they relate to toxically exposed patients
- K2 the detergent, neutralisation, antiseptic and disinfectant agents used within decontamination and the dilution levels to use
- K3 the levels of personal protective equipment needed in relation to different types of contaminant (chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear)
- K4 the procedures to follow to identify the appropriate personal protective equipment needed where the nature of the contamination is not known
- K5 the decontamination processes, methods and resources specified in your organisation's Major Incident Plans and how to minimise cross-contamination
- K6 the importance of effective monitoring of your self, the individual, the area and the equipment used
- K7 who you can turn to for advice and support where monitoring reveals that contamination cannot be brought below threshold levels for action
- K8 the procedures to follow for handling and disposing of wastes generated by the decontamination process
- K9 the role of the Environment Agency in cases of contamination with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear matters
- K10 the methods for decontaminating individuals who have been contaminated as a result of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident
- K11 the importance of decontaminating individuals in a suitable sequence (usually head to foot) to minimise re-contamination
- K12 the importance of early facial decontamination where ventilation equipment is needed
- K13 the importance of treating life threatening injuries before decontaminating an individual
- K14 the issues which individuals may have with decontamination processes as a result of cultural, religious or other beliefs and how to reassure and support them

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- K15 the benefits of engaging individuals as fully as possible in the decontamination processes, including encouraging those who are able to self-decontaminate
- K16 the steps that can be taken to preserve an individual's privacy, dignity and comfort as far as possible during and after decontamination
- K17 the steps needed to preserve an individual's personal items wherever possible, including conventions for labelling and storing goods that cannot be immediately returned to their owner
- K18 when to use follow up procedures, including the prescription and use of antibiotics and vaccinations
- K19 the importance of following plans and observing role responsibilities and physical boundary restrictions
- K20 how to interpret and apply legislation to the work being undertaken
- K21 the importance of obtaining informed consent and how to achieve this
- K22 the ethics concerning consent and confidentiality, and the tensions which may exist between an individual's rights and the organisation's responsibility to individuals
- K23 the importance of gaining assent from individuals who lack capacity to consent

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Additional Information

External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB3 Protection of health and wellbeing

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Developed by	Skills for Health
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