



Injuries from hazardous materials incidents vary depending on the **manner** of exposure (inhalation, ingestion, injection or absorption), the **type** of material involved (acids, ammonia, chlorine, hydrocarbon solvents, sulfides, organophosphates) and the **amount** of exposure (time & concentration).

Harmful products are widely used in home gardening and cleaning, commercial agriculture and cleaning & industrial operations. Civil defense agencies have indicated the increasing threat concerning the use of *Weapons of Mass Destruction* (WMD) as a foreign and domestic terrorist tool. WMD represent an intentional hazardous materials incident.

Due to the magnitude and multiplicity of hazardous materials, this protocol focuses on a general approach to the patient involved in a hazardous materials incident. The substance container may have vital information for resuscitation of an exposed patient. Communication with Medical Control is the best way to obtain rapid and accurate advise on treatment guidelines for specific materials.

Care should be focused on assessing the situation and initiating routine patient care to assure the patient has patent airway, is breathing and has perfusing pulse as well as beginning treatment for shock. Remain uphill, upwind, upstream and upgrade of the incident. **Stay out of the "Hot Zone" (area of potential or real immediate danger or life threat) unless trained, equipped, and authorized to enter.**