



Handling Biological Incidents in Ohio

The Ohio Department of Health has received a record amount of calls from local health departments, partner agencies, and the public regarding Anthrax threats. In light of recent events in the United States and public reaction, we are Re-releasing the Ohio Guidelines: Threatened Human Biological Incident. This protocol was released in January of 2000 and has NOT changed since that release. None of the recent events indicate the need to change these guidelines.

Some Facts about Biologicals, to include Anthrax

1. There is a protocol for handling any suspected biological agent. Following this protocol ensures a response of maximum efficiency and minimum panic.
2. The FBI is the lead law enforcement agency in the investigation of a known threat or actual incident. By Ohio law, the ranking Fire Officer on the scene is the incident commander. FBI may assume the role of Incident Commander.
3. The Ohio Department of Health Lab is capable of handling the lab work needed to identify a suspected biological agent.
4. Decontamination of exposed individuals is NOT warranted. Handwashing followed by a shower at home is all that is necessary. There is no need to capture the water for environmental protection. If visible product is on clothing, that clothing item should be removed and bagged as evidence. Otherwise, the individual can wash the clothes in a normal manner at home. Washing of static surfaces with a dilute solution of household bleach (10 to 1) will kill any spores on the surface.
5. Biologicals, to include Anthrax, must be aerosolized for maximum affect. They need to be placed in the air handling system or launched with a dissemination device in order to get into the air for inhalation. Getting biologicals or suspected biologicals on the skin or clothing is **NOT** an exposure route and does not produce a victim, unless there is a break in the exposed skin for the biological to enter. Handling an unopened envelope is **NOT** an exposure route for biologicals and does not produce a victim.
6. An anthrax threat/incident and any other biological event requires an immediate **PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE**. An anthrax threat/incident is **NOT A HAZMAT INCIDENT**.

What to do if you suspect a biological incident.

1. Notify local law enforcement. They will then consult with FBI on credible threats.
2. Notify your local health department immediately. They will notify ODH.
3. ODH may establish a bridge line with the CDC in Atlanta for consultation if necessary.
4. Law enforcement will direct chain of evidence protocol and transport to ODH lab.
5. Lab analysis produces preliminary results in 4-6 hours.
6. Do NOT decontaminate individuals who may be exposed. The local public health department should be integral to determining exposures.
7. Review the Ohio Guidelines with all crews in fire, police and EMS and include in all preplans, dispatch protocols and planning sessions.

Full copies of the protocol can be found on the ODH web site at <http://www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/DisPrep/disprep1.htm>

The Ohio Department of Health partners with the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, Ohio State Highway Patrol, the State Fire Marshal, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this protocol.