



Handout 3.3—Personal Health and Safety During Response

Personal protection equipment:

- Steel-toed boots, preferably water-proofed
- Heavy-duty and water-proof (e.g., latex or nitrile) work gloves
- Something to cover your nose and mouth if there is a potential for splashes or airborne particulates (dust)
- Goggles/safety glasses with side shields
- Long-sleeve shirts and long pants, or coveralls
- An ANSI-approved hard hat if there's a danger of falling debris
- Hearing protection such as ear plugs or landscaper's ear muffs, if you are in an area where you must shout to be heard
- Mosquito repellent in tropical areas
- If there is a risk of contaminants, including mold, a fit-tested respirator¹:
 - With HEPA filtration for mold or biological hazards
 - With N95 filtration (activated charcoal), if advised to minimize unpleasant odors

Personal hygiene rules:

- Do not, under any circumstances, put your hands in your mouth or on objects that could go into your mouth, such as water bottles or food.
- Wash your hands and body with soap and warm, drinkable water. Do not scrub too hard or rub overly hard on your skin, which needs to remain intact.
- Clean cuts and abrasions thoroughly with soap and water and apply antibiotic ointment.

¹ The use of respirators in the workplace is governed by the Respiratory Protection Standard 29 (CFR1910.134) adopted by OSHA in 1998. Before an employee can use a negative pressure respirator, he/she must be fit-tested annually with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator as the one that will be used. Individuals with facial hair or conditions that may impede formation of a tight seal may not be able to wear a respirator. The Fit Test must be carried out by a trained individual, and requires following OSHA-developed protocols to evaluate the fit of the respirator qualitatively or quantitatively. For a more detailed description, see <http://www.osha.gov>



Prevention of dehydration and exhaustion and injury:

- Drink lots of water (or a 50:50 mix of sports drink and water), and drink at least every half-hour. Avoid soda, alcohol, coffee, and tea, as they can dehydrate your body.
- Take frequent rest breaks and rotate physical tasks.
- Eat light meals.
- Avoid direct sunlight and wear a hat, sunscreen, and loose-fitting clothes if you have to work in the sun.
- If possible, do the heaviest work early in the morning from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and late in the afternoon from 3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Notify your supervisor if you or any of the Response Team members have health or medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, a heart condition, or allergies.
- If you or a team member begins to feel unwell, stop physical tasks and let someone know.

Decontamination of equipment and clothing:

- Wash gear with warm, soapy water and/or bleach.
- Clothing can be washed normally in a household washer.