

SELF- AND BUDDY-DECONTAMINATION

When decontaminating people who may have been exposed to a chemical agent, there are two important criteria: DO IT FAST and DO IT RIGHT! The presence of chemical agent on a person's skin, hair, or clothing may not be readily apparent. Quickly reducing the amount of agent contamination on your own or others body is critical to minimize the adverse health effects to the exposed person and in preventing the spread of secondary contamination to other people or objects. With possible chemical agent exposure you must (1) remove people from the environment containing the agent, and (2) remove the agent from the individual's skin and hair. Self-and Buddy-decon means that a person decons him/herself or assists others in the decon process. Buddy-decon allows for more thorough rinsing of places that may be difficult to reach by oneself (back, buttocks and back of legs).

Decon Steps:

1. Remove all clothing and other items from contact with the body. Include hearing aids, artificial limbs, jewelry, watches, toupees, wigs, etc. Place into labeled plastic bags and seal.

- Contaminated clothing normally removed over the head should be cut off.
- Decon hands using a liquid soap and water solution.
- Remove eyeglasses or replace contact lenses.
- Eyeglasses may be expediently decontaminated by soaking them in a liquid soap and water solution for 3 minutes and rinsing thoroughly with plain water.
- If an artificial limb is required to evacuate, remove it, wash it thoroughly with liquid soap and water solution, rinse with clean water, and reattach it.

2. Flush eyes with copious amounts of warm water, tilting head backwards.

3. Gently wash face and hair with a solution of liquid soap and warm water. Shampoo may be used on hair. Apply soap solution with a one-time use pad or cloth, discarding pad or cloth between applications, then thoroughly rinse with lukewarm water. If warm water is not available, use cold water.

4. Decon other body surfaces by washing with a liquid soap and water applied with a one-time use pad or cloth, followed by a clear-water rinse.

If mustard exposure is suspected, body crevices and warm, moist areas such as underarms should be thoroughly washed and rinsed.

5. Change into uncontaminated clothing. Clothing stored in drawers or closets is likely to be uncontaminated. Place contaminated items in plastic bags.

6. Proceed to the nearest technical decon station, carrying only critical items in a clean and labeled plastic bag.