



JOB AID

**HAZWOPER**  
**DOT EMERGENCY RESPONSE**  
**GUIDEBOOK US**

# HAZWOPER: DOT Emergency Response Guidebook

The DOT Emergency Response Guidebook is for first responders to use during the initial phase of a transportation incident involving hazardous materials or dangerous goods.

As a HAZWOPER first responder, you need to know what the guidebook contains, how it applies to your work and how you should use it. It's important to be familiar with the guidebook **before** an emergency occurs.

## Contents

The goal of the DOT Emergency Response Guidebook is to help first responders identify the risks associated with compromised hazardous materials and determine the safety measures and procedures they should take to protect people and contain the incident as quickly as possible.

To that end, the guidebook contains information about two broad topics. They are how to identify hazardous materials and goods and safe response guidelines.

The preferred way to identify materials and goods is by finding the identification (ID) number and proper shipping name on shipping papers, placards and panels.

In case the ID number or proper shipping name is not available, the guidebook explains how you can gather information about hazardous materials and dangerous goods from:

- Hazard classification markings and placards

- Rail car, tank, trailer and container design
- Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) (label signal words, pictograms, hazard statements, etc.)
- Contacting the generator or shipping company to confirm rail car, tank, trailer and container contents

## Color-Coded Pages

The majority of the guidebook is made up of color-coded reference pages that help you identify the names, ID numbers and relevant guides for materials.

The yellow pages list dangerous goods by their ID numbers, in numerical order. The

blue pages list dangerous goods by their names, in alphabetical order.

Pages with orange borders are emergency response guides with:

- Guide numbers and titles
- Potential hazards
- Public safety information (general, protective clothing and evacuation)
- Emergency response (fires, spills or leaks and first aid)

The green pages contain tables that provide specific response distances for:

- Toxic inhalation hazard materials

- Water-reactive materials
- Chemical warfare agents

### **Green Highlighting**

Materials highlighted in green require you to look at Table 1 in the green section.

If there is a fire, use the appropriate orange page guide for evacuation distances and protect the downwind area according to Table 1.

If there is no fire, go directly to Table 1 in the green pages and look up the initial isolation and protective action distances. You should also consult the appropriate guide in the orange pages.

### **Application**

Instead of rushing in, approach incidents cautiously and from upwind, uphill or upstream to avoid vapor, fumes, smoke and spills. Make sure your vehicle is a safe distance from the scene.

The guidebook provides basic information about how to respond to emergencies: 1.

Identify the hazard.

2. Assess the situation.

3. Obtain support from additional resources, such as law enforcement, firefighters and public services.

4. Respond safely.

Follow your company's standard operating procedures (SOPs).

### **Wind Direction**

Determining wind direction is a critical step that will help you use the emergency response guidebook to determine evacuation distances and defensive actions to take. Use an anemometer or local wind indicator (airsock) at the scene rather than rely on a weather report or app.

### **Flowchart**

To help you make decisions and apply information, there is a flowchart at the beginning of the guidebook.

**WARNING:** Do not use the flowchart if more than one hazardous material/dangerous good is involved. Immediately call the appropriate emergency response agency telephone number listed on the inside back cover of the guidebook.

If only one hazardous material or dangerous good is involved in the incident, the flowchart will guide you through the ways to identify it.