

Training

The training level requirements for responding to a Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) spill

This article is general in nature. All information herein should be used for informational purposes only. Contact your local and state HAZMAT representatives for detailed instructions.

OSHA regulations require that all employees, whose day-to-day activities puts them in contact with or expose them to hazardous substances, be trained by their employers how to not only handle the materials during normal operations but that individuals with each organization should be trained how to respond to spills of those hazardous materials.

responding emergency HAZMAT personnel from local police departments and fire companies will assume the worst case scenario and may respond at levels far in excess of what a spill requires. This worst case scenario response, although designed to provide the greatest potential to deal with a very dangerous situation rapidly, can, if inappropriate to the actual on-site situation, be a waste of valuable emergency response resources, as well as cost the company or organization involved in the spill several thousands of dollars that need not have been spent.

Listed below are the OSHA HAZMAT emergency responder's designations, the areas of responsibility for

Responsibility and training levels

Designation	Areas of responsibility	Training required
First responder - awareness level	can initiate emergency response sequence notifying authorities	minimal basic training
First responder - operations level	should work to contain spill at a safe distance, to protect people, property and the environment	minimum of 8 hours training
Hazardous materials technician	should work at spill site to stop any further releases	minimum of 24 hours of specific training
Hazardous materials specialist	should assist HAZMAT technicians and have specific knowledge of materials involved in spill	minimum of 24 hours of specific training with additional emphasis on those hazardous materials used by employer

Within an organization or company that handles hazardous materials on a regular basis, it is important that persons should be designated to deal with emergency hazardous materials spills. How company personnel respond to a hazardous materials spill and what levels of actions that those employees can initiate in response to a spill is regulated and is a function of the differing levels of emergency response training that they receive.

If the company or organizational personnel on the scene of a hazardous materials spill are not qualified to respond to or are unable to deal with that spill, then

each designation, and the training level required for each.

Turfgrass and landscape managers should realize that they are often in a better position than emergency response authorities to know how to handle the hazardous materials that they work with on a regular basis. So, aside from meeting just the minimal regulatory requirements involved in dealing with any hazardous materials, it is incumbent on managers to be sure that properly trained personnel are available to respond to a spill, not just because it makes good business and legal sense, but because it is their responsibility. —CS