

MITIGATION - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES FOR CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL HAZARD MITIGATION

Biological Incident Response: Building Knowledge Through Operational Testing And Exercises

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) strives to protect human health and the environment from adverse impacts resulting from incidents involving naturally occurring pathogens or the intentional release of biological threat agents. Over the last 15 years several interagency efforts have been conducted to advance the technologies used to characterize and decontaminate indoor and outdoor areas following biological contamination. Collaboration between the U.S. EPA and other federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), has resulted in the execution of several field-scale exercises and operational tests that have helped identify effective methodologies to implement during an actual biological incident, as well as knowledge gaps to consider for subsequent testing. The operational tests included field-scale studies focused on sampling, decontamination, waste management, and cost analysis information for the remediation of indoor and outdoor areas as well as subway systems. The areas included, but were not limited, to large structures and buildings; rolling stock (railcars) and physical structures (tunnels and stations) of an underground transit system; commercial livestock production facilities; and federal government assets and facilities. This poster will provide a high-level overview of some of the interagency operational tests and exercises conducted as well as the operational challenges and lessons learned for future capability enhancements in biological incident response.