



ACT
Government

Justice and Community Safety

OPERATING PROCEDURE	Use of Chemical Agents - Decontamination
OPERATING PROCEDURE NO.	D7.3
SCOPE	ACT Correctional Centres

PURPOSE

To provide instructions to staff on the decontamination process after the use of chemical agents.

PROCEDURE

1 General

- 1.1 The decontamination process must be started as soon as practicable after the person has been exposed to chemical agents.
- 1.2 Officers should, where possible, treat those exposed persons who appear most affected before treating those who appear less affected.
- 1.3 Prior to moving a person for decontamination, the officer must:
 - a. assess the situation and determine that it is safe to do so
 - b. wear disposable gloves and a mask or glasses if needed
- 1.4 Staff must be alert to the signs and symptoms of distress or potential medical emergency in accordance with the Use of Chemical Agents Policy and Use of Force and Restraint Policy when using chemical agents.
- 1.5 Officers must decontaminate a person in accordance with the Use of Chemical Agents Policy and training.

2 Decontamination Process

- 2.1 An affected person should be placed facing into the wind where possible.
- 2.2 In a planned use of chemical agents, the OIC must ensure a suitable decontamination site is identified. In an unplanned use of force officers must use a suitable source of continuous cool water. At the Court Transport Unit, showers are suitable for decontamination.
- 2.3 Tubs, buckets or bowls of water must not be used to decontaminate a person.
- 2.4 The officer must apply a continuous 'soft' flow of fresh, cool water to the affected person's forehead and allow the water to run down over the face.
- 2.5 The officer must instruct the affected person to bend forward to avoid the water running over the rest of the body. Allow the water to flow in a manner that will still allow the affected person to breathe.
- 2.6 The officer must instruct the affected person to:

- a. remain calm
 - b. breathe in via the mouth and out of the nose
 - c. blink their eyes rapidly under the water flow
 - d. blow their nose, cough and spit to remove the chemical agent
 - e. not rub the affected area and eyes
- 2.7 Where practical, allow the affected person to control the water, moving in and out of the water as they need.
- 2.8 A minimum of 15 minutes of water decontamination must be provided. However, only the affected person can say when they are decontaminated. If the facilities and incident permits, access to more water must be permitted.
- 2.9 Once all people have been decontaminated, officers must ensure any PPE including respirators or breathing apparatus is aired and, where appropriate, decontaminated in accordance with training.

3 Decontamination of a Detainee

- 3.1 Officers must inform the affected detainee they can assist them in the decontamination process, but the detainee must follow all officer directions.
- 3.2 Where a detainee is non-compliant with officers' direction, officers must ensure the detainee is appropriately contained for the safety of themselves and others.
- 3.3 Decontamination with water must only be commenced when the detainee is compliant with the officer's instructions and where it is safe to do so.
- 3.4 Where officers are assisting a detainee to decontaminate and the detainee becomes non-compliant with officers' directions, officers may restrain the detainee in accordance with the Use of Force and Restraint Policy.
- 3.5 The officer must remove any items covering the affected detainee's face, including glasses. However, contact lenses must only be removed by a healthcare professional or the detainee themselves.
- 3.6 Where the detainee's clothing is not being seized as evidence the items must be stored and washed separately to prevent cross contamination.
- 3.7 The detainee must be immediately issued with fresh ACTCS issued clothing and be placed on observations for a minimum of one hour or as otherwise advised by a Justice Health staff member.

Decontamination at The Court Transport Unit

- 3.8 Detainees must be assisted to self-decontaminate in the shower where possible.
- 3.9 Officers must provide decontamination aftercare in the first instance with an ambulance to be contacted in cases of continuing significant symptoms or medical emergencies.
- 3.10 Where chemical agents are used, the detainee is to be placed on 15x24 hour observations until such time as the detainee is released from custody or transported to Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).

- 3.11 Where a detainee is released from custody after being exposed to chemical agents and continues to display symptoms, they should be offered assistance with seeking further medical advice, such as phoning their medical service.

4 Decontamination of a Person other than a Detainee

- 4.1 Persons other than a detainee, e.g., officers, other staff members, visitors or contractors, must be assisted to decontaminate in accordance with section 2.
- 4.2 Where possible, clothing contaminated by chemical agents should be placed in bags and labelled as contaminated with the chemical agent to avoid cross-contamination. Clothing can safely be taken home to launder.
- 4.3 A person whose clothing has been contaminated by chemical agents must be offered the opportunity to access fresh clothing.
- 4.4 Once a person can continue with self-decontamination, assisting officers should move to the next person.
- 4.5 All people exposed to chemical agents, who remain on ACTCS premises, must be placed on regular observations for continuing significant symptoms or medical emergency for a minimum of one hour or in accordance with medical advice.
- 4.6 Where a person other than a detainee leaves ACTCS premises within the one-hour period in 4.5 or continues to display symptoms after one hour, the person should be offered assistance with seeking further medical advice, such as phoning their medical service.

Decontamination of Officers

- 4.7 Officers who have participated in a use of force involving chemical agents must wash their hands as soon as practical.
- 4.8 Officers whose clothing has been exposed to chemical agents must notify the CO3, who will ensure they are issued with fresh clothing from stores. To prevent secondary contamination an unaffected officer must retrieve any replacement clothing required.
- 4.9 Where a staff member who has been exposed to a chemical agent continues to experience symptoms after decontamination, their supervisor should consider temporarily changing their duties.

5 Crime Scene Management

- 5.1 If the area in which a chemical agent was used is to be considered a crime scene and further investigation is required, the scene should be secured with only limited ventilation, as per the Crime Scene Management Operating Procedure and Evidence Management Operating Procedure. Decontamination will not commence until the crime scene has been released by ACT Police.
- 5.2 Officers securing the crime scene must manage any chemical agent units/canisters used in the incident as potential evidence. Where police wish to remove canisters, officers must record the serial numbers of units and provide them to the Armoury Officer, so the units can be accounted for in records.

- 5.3 Investigators must be informed that a chemical agent was used, and that the area has not been ventilated.
- 5.4 Where a detainee or officer is exposed to chemical agents and their clothing is considered evidence as part of a crime, The Officer-in-Charge must ensure officers seize all clothing as per the Evidence Management Operating Procedure. The person must be issued with fresh ACTS issued clothing. The evidence bags must be labelled that chemical agents were used and that the items have not been decontaminated.
- 5.5 Where a person other than a detainee or officer is exposed to chemical agents and their clothing is considered evidence as part of a crime, the officers establishing the crime scene must request that the person remain until ACT Policing take charge of the crime scene.

6 Building Decontamination

- 6.1 If the area is not considered a crime scene an officer must ensure normal ventilation of the area. Use of an extractor fan may be appropriate.
- 6.2 The Officer-in-Charge will determine whether ACTCS staff will decontaminate the exposed area or a specialised external cleaning service is required. The area must be ventilated for a suitable period before cleaning and the decontamination cleaner must wear appropriate PPE.
- 6.3 The Officer-in-Charge must also consult the Facilities Management Unit to determine if additional equipment servicing or cleaning is required before the space is reoccupied.
- 6.4 All exposed food must be disposed of. Contaminated areas may be washed with soap and water.
- 6.5 Detainee clothing or property contaminated by chemical agents must be placed in bags and labelled as contaminated with the chemical agent, the date of the incident and the detainee's name and PID. Clothing must be provided to the Laundry Officer for laundering. Bags with property other than clothing must be provided to the detainee once they have returned to their cell, with advice on how to decontaminate items.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

- A – D7. Use of Chemical Agents Policy
- B – Use of Force and Restraint Policy
- C - Crime Scene Management Operating Procedure
- D - Evidence Management Operating Procedure

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ACT Corrective Services
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Document details

Criteria	Details
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Responsible Officer:	General Manager AMC & Director Court Transport Unit
Compliance:	This operating procedure reflects the requirements of the <i>Corrections Management (Policy Framework) Policy 2020</i>

Version Control			
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