



11 November 2020

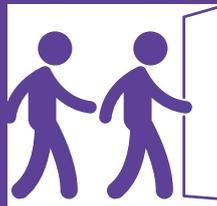
NATIONAL BULLETIN

## Preparing your staff: What to do in the event of a hazardous substance incident

If you think someone has been exposed to a **HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE**

Use caution and keep a safe distance to avoid exposure yourself.

**TELL THOSE AFFECTED TO:**



**REMOVE**  
THEMSELVES...



**REMOVE**  
OUTER CLOTHING...



**REMOVE**  
THE SUBSTANCE...

**ACT QUICKLY.** These actions can **SAVE LIVES.**

**A criminal incident took place on 20th October 2020 which involved the consecutive dispersals of a noxious substance into three business premises in the West Midlands.**

Staff and customers at two food outlets and a supermarket were exposed to what is thought to be a type of pepper spray around 7pm. Fifteen people were treated at the scenes for breathing difficulties by paramedics, with one taken to hospital. None have suffered any lasting effects. A man has since been arrested.

Although this was a criminal incident, there are some early learnings which are of relevance to our Protect network of businesses.

In response to the incident, emergency services deployed the REMOVE advice, which is designed as the early response for suspected exposure to a hazardous substance. After following the advice, symptoms amongst the casualties were greatly reduced.

The REMOVE advice is available to business, via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remove-guidance-on-removing-hazardous-substances>, and we recommend that you consider whether your employees have been provided with the advice, and whether they would be able to respond safely in the early moments of a similar incident.

Improving the ability of employees to be able to recognise a similar situation and act quickly in response to unexplained symptoms or suspicious activities involving a hazardous material is an issue we are continuing to explore. We hope to support the network with a further recognition tool in the coming months, in partnership with the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI).

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