

How to ensure your company doesn't have an 'unknown chemical' or white powder incident

- Always ensure Chemicals are well documented and that all the relevant parties are aware of the substance in auestion
- Ensure that the packaging you are selecting is suited and compliant with your chosen mode of transport and ask, what could lead to a containment failure and is this possible?
- Comply with transport and supply regulations by making necessary declarations and disclosures on the suitable paperwork
- Although more information does require more labor, it can help when responding to an incident, allowing for faster remediation, legislation may at times seem excessive, but **sometimes meeting and exceeding the** requirements will help improve safety

Lessons learned

- Register your products before you arrange for transport, the incident could have been resolved in a single call had the emergency responder had hazard information
- Ensure that duty contacts are available in the event of an emergency, the response could have been handled quicker had the duty manager been available to advise us of the risks or if the site had been able to inform us what sample they had shipped
- Consider whether you're using the best possible packaging for the mode of transport, in this case would a plastic sample bag contained in an outer package have been safer?
- Ensure your emergency response provider is capable of providing expert advice even with limited or no information at their disposal

For more information, please get in touch.

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Philadelphia Airport Dealing with an unknown hazmat incident

Call background

- Call from the Lufthansa Cargo Area at Philadelphia Airport
- A fibre glass box containing 10g of a client's substance was crushed and the substance had spilled out

Advice

- **Cordon** around substance
- Safe transport and disposal advice provided

Process for identifying unknown chemicals

What information is available?

Is there any information which may be useful? This incident was much faster to handle as we had some information regarding the UN/NA classification. Typical sources could be transport documents, SDS or labels - take care of reused containers.

What if there is no information available?

If there is no information available the safest course of action is to assume all hazards, some of these we can discount if you know the manufacturer. This means that we will be providing advice which ensures people will be safe when dealing with the incident.

Is it necessary to know immediately what the substance is?

It's worth deciding if knowing what the product is will change the response to the incident. In this case the spill was small scale and we had some information to indicate the level of hazard we were dealing with, but had we not had the information regarding the hazards we'd have likely provided the same advice, with the addition of keep the substance dry and do not allow any ignition sources in the area.

It is necessary to know what the substance is?

In the event of a large spill where the hazards are unclear and will affect the response the spill must be contained and identified to some degree. This means that properly protected and trained personnel (usually emergency responders) approach the spill and use educated testing to either match the substances or sufficiently identify the hazards of the substance to be able to remediate the spillage. If this is not possible laboratory testing may be required.

Process for identifying unknown chemicals

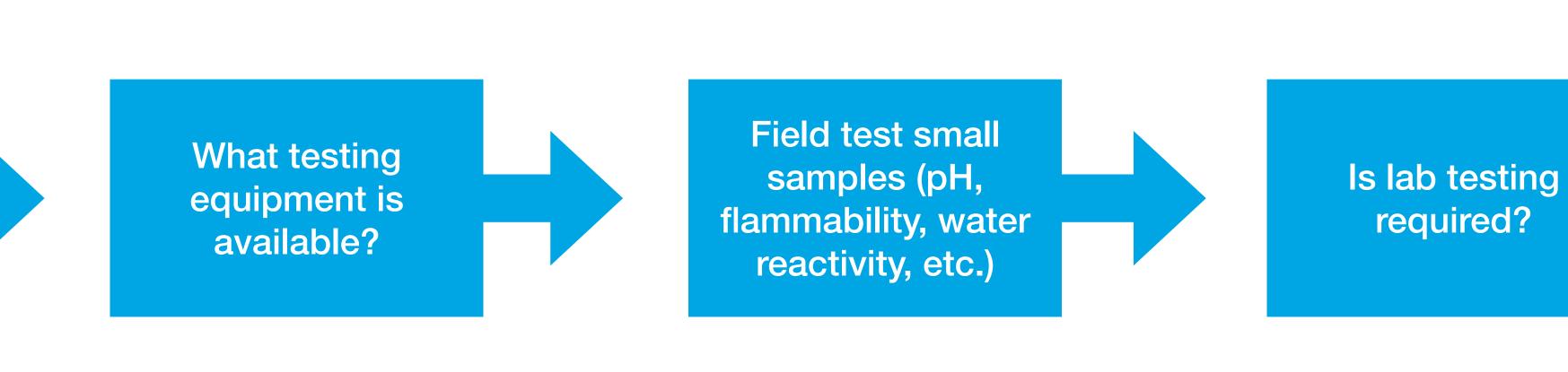
What information is available?

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Do we need to identify the substance to make it safe?

• The caller only knew the UN/NA classification of the substance: UN2811, toxic solid, organic, NOS; proper shipping name: heterocyclic hydrocarbon, containing nitrogen heterocycle • A member of staff on site had got some of the substance on their skin and a colleague was calling to obtain medical advice and information regarding the exact identity of the product

• Worked on assumption that the product was highly toxic via skin – wash for 15 mins – seek medical attention – as product not registered



Spectroscopy, chromatography and separation methods.