

HAZMAT

There are many hazardous materials (HAZMAT) in the petroleum industry. If they are not controlled correctly, they create a high risk to the health and safety of people and the environment. These hazardous materials include chemicals, biological agents, and materials which emit radiation. In different ways, each of these groups can be extremely dangerous. Consequently, they require highly specialized skills and equipment and efficient procedures to deal with all incidents successfully.

As soon as the Fire Protection Department is informed of a hazardous materials incident, appropriate fire crews and equipment are sent to the location.

Standard procedures determine the number of crews and types of equipment to be sent. Their first, and most important, task is to evaluate the situation so that they can make the correct decisions. An important part of this task is to inform the Fire Control Center if special protective equipment and breathing apparatus are necessary.

Next, a Hot Zone is established, or created, around the incident to protect people outside the area from being harmed. The size of the zone is determined by the amount and type of hazardous material and by its location.

A Warm Zone is then created around the Hot Zone. Only essential personnel and equipment are allowed to enter this area. It is in this zone that people who have been affected by the hazardous materials are decontaminated.

A Cold Zone is created around the Warm Zone. The HAZMAT command post is located here and organizes operations. Only essential personnel from Saudi Aramco and outside agencies may enter this zone.

The accurate identification of these three zones is extremely important for the health and safety of firemen and other personnel. In the most serious hazardous materials incidents, for example, protective clothes covering each employee's entire body and a self-contained breathing apparatus are essential. An unprotected person would be at high risk of serious injury or death.

—309 words

Now, read the statements below. Are they true or false? Write T for True and F for False.

1. Only Fire Protection Department employees may enter the Cold Zone. _____
2. When a hazardous materials incident is reported, a fireman is sent to check the situation. _____
3. You can guess from the passage that medical personnel can treat victims for injuries in the Cold Zone. _____
4. People outside the Hot Zone are not likely to be injured or killed. _____
5. It is not always necessary to establish a very wide Hot Zone. _____
6. There is always a big risk of radiation in hazardous materials incidents. _____
7. People without protective clothing are at high risk in the Hot Zone. _____