



McNeil Monthly

SIREN TIME: RESIDUAL DRUG EXPOSURE

First Responders are being called to more and more cases of overdoses or drug labs gone wrong. While Fire and EMS agencies are more likely to be called after something goes wrong, it doesn't eliminate the potential hazards that today's illicit drugs carry. Residual drug exposure is becoming prevalent for First Responders due to the ever evolving methods of drug manufacturing. Even what seems to be the most routine calls have the potential to expose you and your partner to deadly situations. Taking basic and simple precautions may help save your life.

- If something doesn't feel right call for law enforcement. Don't question yourself if something seems abnormal or suspicious. Drug labs are often designed to be as invisible as possible and sometimes rigged with explosives or "booby-traps".
- Work together! Dispatch, Police, Fire, and EMS agencies have their own tasks to do, but everyone strives to serve and protect. You serve and protect not only the community but each other. Sharing information about the call may be able to help the organizations involved respond in a safe manner.
- Conduct scene assessments using dispatch information and what is visible as indicators of what level of PPE you should wear while responding. Whether it is nitrile gloves and an N95 mask or a full set of gear, training as an organization on how best to assess a scene is important. Personal Protective Equipment can save your life.
- If you are working a scene where drugs or drug related activity has been suspected or witnessed a decontamination station should be established. Wash gear down with soap and water before removing it and returning to duty. Understand how to safely remove disposable gloves and masks to avoid skin absorption or inhalation of residual drug exposure.
- While operating on the scene of a drug related activity, never eat or drink anything without decontaminating and removing any exposed gear or equipment.

Questions about safety?

Call McNeil & Co. Risk Management: 800-822-3747 ext. 176
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