



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Control measure

**Substance identification: Toxic  
materials**



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC

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### Control measure knowledge

This control measure should be read in conjunction with National Operational Guidance – Hazardous materials: Substance identification.

Ensuring that personnel immediately recognise the presence or potential presence of substances with toxic health hazards will enable suitable control measures to be implemented to protect responders and the public particularly in the initial stages of an incident.

Materials with the primary hazard of 'toxic' (other than toxic gases) will be assigned to UN Hazard Class 6.1. It covers substances that possess a low lethal dose.

### Labelling

Materials labelled for transport or use will be displayed with one of the following symbols:



The exclamation mark symbol is used for other hazards in addition to 'harmful' (e.g. irritant).



UN Transport Class 2.3 is for toxic gases only, such as ammonia, chlorine or hydrogen chloride.

As well as labelling on containers, other information sources will enable other toxic/harmful hazards to be identified, such as Chemdata, Wiser and the Emergency Response Guidebook.

Information gained from containers or data sources should be compared with other information



from the scene (such as signs and symptoms from casualties) to triangulate the information and increase confidence.

## **Strategic actions**

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have procedures and support arrangements with regard to recognising toxic substances and how to protect people from acute health effects

## **Tactical actions**

Incident commanders should:

- Use signs, labels, markings and container types to identify the presence of toxic materials
- Identify the location, physical state (solid, liquid, gas), type, quantity and toxicity of the released material
- Use detection equipment to identify and monitor levels of the toxic materials involved