

Investigative Response: FBI Hazardous Materials Response Unit



**Federal Bureau of Investigation
Laboratory Division
Hazardous Materials Response Unit**

FBI HMRU

- FBI Laboratory
 - Operational Response Section
- Located at the FBI Academy
 - Laboratory Building





Mission



- Provide technical and scientific response to FBI Investigations involving Hazardous Materials, including Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- Provide training for FBI personnel involved in “down range” HazMat or WMD operations.
- Provide safety oversight at “high hazard” FBI Crime Scenes.



HMRU Staff



- **Supervisory Special Agents**
 - Expertise in ERT/HMRT Team Management and National WMD policy.
- **Hazardous Materials Officers, Paramedics & Specialists**
 - Career professionals with backgrounds in Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Emergency Management, Urban Search and Rescue and Military.
- **PhD Scientists & Radiological Specialists**
 - Career professionals with backgrounds in Biological, Chemical and Radiological Sciences.
- **Operational Support Staff**
 - Program Analysts and Logistics Specialists to support HMRU Administrative and Operational Missions.





FBI Field HMRT's

- 27 Teams
- Respond with HMRU to Incidents
- Collect Evidence at WMD or other Hazardous Crime scenes
- FBI Special Agents and Professional Support Employees



HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE TEAMS



Operational HMRTs - 27
Satellite Teams - 3

HMRU Response Matrix

- At Request of Field Division, LEGAT
 - Threat Assessment
 - Tier 1
 - Response
 - Tier 2
 - Assessment, Escort, Safety Officer, Tactical Team Support
 - Tier 3
 - Tier 2 with Addition of Field HMRT
 - Tier 4
 - Tier 3 with Additional Scientific Equipment



HMRU Missions

1996 – May 2007

- 519 Response Missions
- 105 Special Events
- 13 National Level Exercises





Why Do We Collect Evidence?

- “to establish facts...in courts of law” (*def.*)
- Reconstruct the Crime Scene
 - What happened?
 - How did it happen?
 - Who committed the crime?
 - When did it happen?
 - Where did it happen?
- Identify and prosecute the Perpetrator
 - Traditional Forensic Evidence
 - Attribution of Evidence to Source





Collection of Evidence

- **Samples collected from crime scene are potential evidence.**
- **Evidence collection requires the use of ERT Procedures, including:**
 - Evaluation of possible physical evidence
 - Narrative description
 - Photographs of crime scene
 - Sketch/Diagram of crime scene
 - Detailed Search; Record and Collect Evidence
 - Final Survey
 - Release of Crime Scene



Types of Evidence Collected

- CBRN Materials
 - Bulk or samples (swabs, wipes)
- Traditional Forensic Evidence contaminated with Hazardous Materials
- Bulky Evidence
 - e.g., Mailbox, sprayer





Problems with Handling Hazardous Evidence

- Issues common to collection and examination of CBRN evidence
 - Material is inherently dangerous
 - Risk spread of contamination
 - Need to maintain integrity of the evidence
- Need to minimize the hazardous risk to personnel and environment



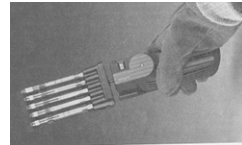
Field Safety Screening

- **Performed by HazMat Team (Local/FBI)**
- **To Protect Health and Safety**
 - **Victims**
 - **Responders**
 - **Community**
 - **Laboratory Personnel (PH and Forensic)**
- **Provide Initial Characterization of the Hazard**



Field Safety Screening

- Explosives/Devices
- Radiological/Nuclear
- Flammables
- Volatile Organic Compounds
- Corrosives





Decontamination

- **Upon completion of evidence collection:**
 - **Overpacked evidence & personnel are decontaminated**
 - to preserve public health & safety
 - to prevent spread of contamination
 - to prevent cross-contamination in laboratory



Questions?