

RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION AND LIFE-THREATENING INJURY

It is imperative in all cases of life-threatening injuries that life-saving actions be taken immediately. Generally, only after the victim has been attended to medically should one be concerned with the radiation hazards that may be associated with the injury.

An external exposure to a radiation source will not make the victim radioactive or "contaminated".

Contamination will result only if a powder, liquid, or other similar dispersible material containing radioactive material is accidentally spilled on the victim. If radioactive contamination is not involved, the victim should be treated as any other emergency case. It is very important to know if radioactive contamination is involved as the presence of radioactive contamination significantly alters the way in which the Yale-New Haven Hospital Emergency Room receives the patient. The following guidelines should be followed when an accident occurs in a radioactive materials laboratory involving a life-threatening injury and radioactive contamination:

- Assess the medical condition of the victim and render first aid as required. Try to determine the extent of the injury. Prevent unnecessary people from entering the area of a radiation hazard.
- Call or have a co-worker call the 911 from any Yale phone.
- The following information should be relayed to the police officer:
 - Victim's name
 - Victim's location-building and room number
 - Nature of injury
 - Your name and phone number
 - The radioactive material present on the victim along with the approximate quantity
- The Campus Police may call back to verify your call. Campus Police will call the Radiation Safety Office at Environmental Health and Safety.
- Await the arrival of emergency medical personnel. If possible, send a co-worker to meet the ambulance in order to escort emergency medical personnel to the accident scene.
- Remove contaminated items and clothing from the victim if the medical condition is such that these actions would not do further harm to the victim.
- If time permits, place absorbent matting on the floor to provide a non-contaminated path for the emergency crew.
- Accompany the victim to the emergency room. You may be able to provide valuable information to the medical team attending the victim.