

SULFUR MUSTARD EXPOSURE

Guidance for Emergency Medical Response



PROBLEM

- Unused **chemical munitions** were disposed of off the coast of NJ from WWII through the 1970s.
- **Commercial fishing and shellfish** operations increasingly pull in these waste munitions with catch.
- Some can leak the chemical fill out as gas or liquid, causing **potentially severe injury** to crew members.

SULFUR MUSTARD (HD)

A blistering chemical agent found in munitions that can leak from casing when exposed to the warm air. It is a yellow to brown oily liquid with a slight garlic or mustard odor. Vapor can reach hazardous levels, particularly during warm weather.



Emergency and
Medical Management
Recommendations for
Sulfur Mustard
Exposures

HIGH RISK GROUPS

- Clammers and other commercial fishermen
- Household members of commercial fishermen
- Employees at commercial seafood processing facilities
- Emergency responders
- Healthcare personnel

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE

Damage from exposure to blistering agents can vary based on the duration and degree to which a person was exposed. Signs and symptoms are often delayed, appearing hours to days after initial contact.

- SKIN:** Redness and itching of the skin within two hours; often progresses to yellow, fluid filled blisters as the primary symptom.
- EYES:** Irritation, pain, swelling, and tearing within one to two hours of severe exposures, up to twelve hours after mild or moderate exposures. Severe exposure may also lead to light sensitivity, intense pain, or blindness lasting up to ten days.
- RESPIRATORY:** Sneezing, runny or bloody nose, sinus pain, shortness of breath, cough, and hoarseness within two to four hours of severe exposures, up to 24 hours after mild exposures.
- DIGESTIVE:** Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever.
- IMMUNE:** Weakness, bleeding, and infections due to pancytopenia (decreased counts of all blood cells) or aplastic anemia (bone marrow stops producing of all types of blood cells).

Report Workplace-Related
Poisonings to NJDOH at
609-826-4984.

1-800-222-1222



[NJDOH | HD Hazardous Substance Facts](#)
[CDC NIOSH | HD Emergency Response](#)
[CDC | Chemical Warfare Material](#)