Department of the Army
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program

CSEPP Policy Paper Number 20 (Revised)

ADOPTION OF ACUTE EXPOSURE GUIDELINE LEVELS (AEGLs)

In November 2001, CSEPP Policy Paper 20 officially adopted Acute Exposure Guidelines Levels (AEGLs) as the toxicity criteria to be used by the CSEPP community. This update revises the November 2001 policy paper and provides additional information to assist States and CSEPP communities on incorporating the AEGLs into emergency planning and response activities. States and communities, assisted by the Army and FEMA, are encouraged to complete this incorporation as quickly as possible but not later than September 2003 and provides clarification as how this is to be accomplished.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-sponsored committee that develops AEGLs has finalized the values for sulfur mustard and nerve agents. The CSEPP adopts these finalized AEGL values as the toxicity criteria to be used by the CSEPP community. AEGL concentration levels are provided in the supporting information enclosed with this policy. Information as to the development, rationale, and specific health effects associated with AEGLs is also provided in the enclosed fact sheets.

AEGLs are to be used for CSEPP depot and off-post emergency planning and response. AEGLs are to be used in air dispersion models to establish potential areas at risk from chemical warfare accidents. The three different AEGL health effect levels allow emergency planners and responders to prioritize resources and activities associated with a chemical release. While specific decisions to take action such as evacuation or shelter-in-place may vary by location and event, this policy stipulates the following minimum decision criteria. These criteria are consistent with existing emergency planning response procedures used by industry and hazardous material (HAZMAT) response personnel:

- Consistent with CSEPP Policy Paper 1, priority should be to prevent exposures above AEGL-3, which could result in severe, incapacitating, and possibly lethal outcomes.

- To accomplish this, protective actions should be directed toward preventing or minimizing exposures above AEGL-2, above which some temporary but potentially escape-impairing effects could occur.

- Sites will also be provided with modeling results showing estimated AEGL-1 plume boundaries. A Protective Action Recommendation should be provided to the community stating that no action is required to protect the public from AEGL 1 plume exposure. This information may be used at the discretion of local emergency decision-makers to alert and notify communities.

These criteria reflect Army/FEMA recommendations; however, final site-specific decisions for off-post responses using AEGLs are a local CSEPP community decision. States and local emergency managers selecting alternative decision-criteria should document the criteria and rationale and coordinate associated planning with Army and FEMA by the implementation date of this policy. Implementation of this policy infers that the Army has provided the modeling and software capability and output based on the described decision criteria and the States and local emergency managers are accommodating this information in their planning and response activities.

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