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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT?

A GUIDE FOR OIL SPILL WORKERS AND GULF AREA RESIDENTS

FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT OIL EXPOSURE

1. Oil spills lead to the release of hazardous chemicals into the water, soil and air.
2. Oil spill workers and area residents are at risk of being exposed to these chemicals.
3. Workers and coastal area residents can be exposed to toxins resulting from the oil spill through:
 - a. *Skin contact*
 - b. *Inhalation of gas fumes*
 - c. *Inhalation of tiny droplets of oily sea water (aerosols)*
4. Inhalation exposure has been found to have the gravest effects on health, more so than skin (dermal) exposure.
5. Clothing worn under protective apparel can also be contaminated leading to cross contamination during laundry.
6. Sun exposure is an often overlooked risk for oil spill workers.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

1. Always wear protective clothing when handling oil.
2. Area residents should use air purifiers in their homes to improve the quality of air they breathe.

GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

1. Protective clothing should be water and oil proof, yet breathable.
2. Protective footwear should be worn at all times.
3. Gloves should be worn at all times.
4. Respirators will protect against inhalation hazards.
5. Wear eye protection.

GUIDELINES FOR LAUNDERING CLOTHING WORN UNDER PROTECTIVE APPAREL

1. Launder clothes separately from the general wash.
2. Use warm or hot soapy water to wash the clothes.
3. Add a cup of white vinegar during the rinse cycle to reduce the oily smell.

GUIDELINES FOR SUN EXPOSURE PROTECTION

1. Wear hats with wide rims.
2. Use sunscreen on exposed skin.