POSSIBLE INDICATIONS OF AN NRBC EVENT

- Suspicious devices or packages (boxes with wiring, compressed air cylinders with tubing, containers with powders, liquids or aerosols, etc.)
- Oily film or unusual powdery or gel-like substances on exposed surfaces
- Unusual liquid sprays or vapours in the air, falling on the ground or on exposed surfaces
- Unauthorized, unexplained, or out-of-season spraying in the area
- Unexplained odours (smell of bitter almonds, peach kernels, mown hay, cut grass)
- Cases of nausea, difficulty in breathing, convulsions, disorientation, or patterns of illness inconsistent with natural disease (reported or confirmed by public health agencies)
- An abrupt spike in the rate of death among animals in the area
- Low-lying clouds or fog unrelated to weather, clouds of dust or of suspended, possibly coloured, particles
- People dressed unusually (long-sleeved shirts or overcoats in warm weather) or wearing protective masks, particularly in crowded areas such as underground train stations or stadiums

In the absence of any other information, the following “1-2-3 protocol” should be considered in case of casualties:

IF 1 CASUALTY: PROCEED AS USUAL

IF 2 CASUALTIES: EXERCISE CAUTION
Look for other indications before proceeding; seek advice if unsure

IF 3 CASUALTIES: DO NOT PROCEED
Refer to “What to do in case …” and take action accordingly; seek advice

MISSION
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.
Exposure to NRBC agents may occur not only when they are released and dispersed but also afterwards, in places that have been contaminated. It may occur even in places initially unaffected, as a result of cross-contamination through transfer by exposed persons or materials. Possible ‘routes of exposure’ are listed below:

- inhalation (of airborne agents)
- contact with eyes, skin or open wounds
- consumption of contaminated food or water
- hand-to-mouth transmission after contact with contaminated material
- person-to-person transmission
- inhalation of re-suspended, persistent agents
- contact with/intake of persistent agents.

An additional source of concern is that most NRBC agents are difficult to detect or recognize—being invisible, odourless or impalpable.

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