

# Appendix 'C'

## Protection Against Corrosive Fluids

### Introduction

- C1 The aim of this procedure and guidance is to set in place control methods, including the provision of First Aid, in the interests of the safety of police personnel who are subject to attacks using corrosive fluids.
- C2 This applies to those responsible for deploying Tactical Support Groups (TSGs) and Police Support Units (PSUs) in situations where they may encounter corrosive fluids.

### Legal Basis

- C3 Article 4(1) of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 places a duty on the office of the Chief Constable to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all his employees.

### Procedure And Guidance

- C4 In Northern Ireland, protest groups have made use of corrosive fluid when attacking police and police equipment. Such attacks may occur during public order policing deployments. This issue must be considered during the risk assessment process. Control methods, including the provision of first aid, bulk water carrying capacity, disposable gloves, temporary clothing and evidence bagging kits appropriate for the retention of contaminated clothing/corrosive fluid specimens, must be considered by those responsible for deploying TSGs / PSUs. The water carriers should have the facility to dispense water quickly and this could be achieved using carriers with dispenser taps.
- C5 Corrosive fluids, on contact with skin or eyes, cause irritation, burns or pain and immediate first aid is essential. Officers should be mindful of secondary contamination from police equipment e.g. police vehicles.
- C6 In treating corrosive burns, the main aim is to disperse the chemical and stop the burning by flooding the area, using copious amounts of water for a period of 20 minutes (or longer if pain persists). The use of 'Water-Jel®' is recommended once the area has been irrigated and contaminated clothing has been removed. Treatment of corrosive burns to the eyes can be difficult, as the eyes may close in spasms and it may be necessary to hold the eyelids open to allow the water to reach the eyes. **Do not allow the casualty to touch the injured eye or forcibly remove a contact lens.** Care should be taken not to wash the chemicals from one eye to the other. Persons administering treatment should wear gloves. **Once the eye is irrigated, for at least 10 minutes the casualty may hold a sterile eye dressing or a clean, non-fluffy pad over the injured eye.** Immediate medical attention should be obtained at the scene or the nearest hospital.

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- C7 All contaminated clothing should be removed using gloves and replaced with suitable temporary clothing. However, before any clothing removal, the victim must be sluiced down with running water. On no account should the clothes removed be reworn. The neutralization of corrosive fluids, as opposed to first aid, should be carried out by experts.
- C8 It is not essential that the fluid be immediately identified to enable appropriate first aid, although any subsequent identification should be passed to the medical authorities. If a victim shows after effects, e.g. pain or other sensation, they should be taken immediately for medical examination, even if several hours have elapsed since contamination.
- C9 The PSNI CBRN Bronze officer may be able to assist in quick time identification of the contaminant, and should be contacted through the Incident Manager at the Incident Co-ordination Centre (ICC).
- C10 Items of clothing removed from the victim should be carefully packaged and forwarded to the Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) for examination, in order that the medical experts may be made aware of the type of fluid used and to assist in subsequent criminal investigations. Available medical teams on the ground should, if possible, carry out initial tests.
- C11 Any reported attack using corrosive fluids must be passed on to the Incident Manager, ICC for the information of the Service and other interested parties.
- C12 Supervisors must ensure that any incident where a member of the PSNI is subjected to an attack by corrosive fluids is reported using current Service accident reporting procedures. This will ensure the incident is brought to the attention of the relevant branches and will ensure compliance with statutory obligations.