

Health and Safety On-Site

Washington DC Processing and Distribution Center Brentwood

This fact sheet is one in a series of fact sheets providing information on the anthrax decontamination activities at the Washington DC Processing and Distribution Center Brentwood.

What security measures are in place?

A security force guards the Brentwood Facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The facility premises is not only guarded but also patrolled to ensure the safety of the general public by making sure that no person inadvertently enters the property. Only authorized persons are allowed to gain access to the facility. The facility is also posted with Biohazard warning labels as an extra precautionary measure.

How are workers prepared before entering the site?

Authorized personnel receive a site orientation that reviews the health and safety requirements for visiting and working at the site. Workers at the site that are part of the facility cleanup and are potentially exposed to anthrax are given an orientation to the site health and safety plan designed to protect workers from contracting anthrax as well as protect them against other hazards. Essentially, the orientation ensures that workers understand all of the potential hazards and the ways in which they will be protected. These workers must also have prior training in hazardous waste cleanup and have been medically evaluated and approved by an occupational physician to wear respiratory protection.

How are cleanup workers protected from anthrax?

Workers at the site wear protective equipment, such as chemical protective coveralls, gloves, and boots to protect against skin contact with potential anthrax spores. Respiratory protection is worn to protect against inhalation of any airborne anthrax spores. When workers complete their task in the facility, their protective coveralls and respirators are cleaned through a decontamination process within enclosed

tents. This process ensures that any anthrax spores on the protective equipment are killed prior to removing the gear and ensures anthrax spores are not spread to areas outside of the facility. In addition, air-handling units have been placed within the facility to prevent any airborne release of anthrax spores when entering and exiting the building. All vents and openings to the building have been sealed to prevent release of anthrax spores.



Worker protection also extends to other hazards that may be posed to workers while performing clean-up tasks. Other potential hazards include contact with chemicals, falls from roof work, and overheating in protective suits.

What medical monitoring do the workers undergo?

In addition to wearing protective equipment, workers performing clean-up operations at the facility are given antibiotics as an extra precautionary measure of protection. Workers at the site are monitored by an occupational physician and remain on antibiotics throughout the course of the work and an additional 60 days after their last workday at the site.