

Dr. Erin Perry

Field care of a canine exposed to contaminants either chemical or microbiological, should always include consultation with the veterinarian of record. Ingestion, inhalation or other routes of exposure may warrant more aggressive steps. Below are suggested steps for decontamination of a canine following suspected/known exposure when water is available for the decontamination procedure.

1. Protect yourself with **proper PPE**.
2. **Remove soiled equipment** (collar, leash, vest, etc.) and dispose of soiled toys. Soiled equipment should be thoroughly decontaminated prior to reuse.
3. Begin at the head and **wipe face, eyes, muzzle and ear** areas. Ocular irrigation may be warranted if known contamination occurred. **Take care to avoid cleanser contact with mucus membranes.**
4. Lather the dog (top to bottom and front to back) using either 2% Chlorhexidine or 7.5% Povidone scrub. Both have effective virucidal, and bacteriocidal properties and are effective at reduction of oil-based chemicals. Allow **10 minutes of contact time** for maximum antimicrobial efficacy.
5. Likely areas of exposure include the abdomen and lower legs. **Lather high-exposure areas** well then rinse thoroughly.
6. **Dry** completely using disposable towels.



Canines who have had suspected exposure should be prevented from self-grooming. Appropriate muzzles (to allow panting) should be utilized to prevent ingestion exposure.

Canine Field Decon (wipes only)

Field care of a canine working in high risk areas should include maintenance efforts for decontamination at the end of each work cycle. Below are suggested steps for maintenance decontamination of a canine at the completion of a work cycle when water is unavailable, and no known or suspected exposure has occurred.

1. **Remove equipment** (collar, leash, vest, etc.). Leather equipment can be wiped down.
2. Begin at the head and **wipe face, eyes, muzzle and ear** areas and thoroughly wipe.
3. Wipe the dog (top to bottom and front to back) using a disposable towel saturated with Chlorhexidine or Povidone (mixed with water at a 1:4 ratio). Use separate towels for each area. Allow **10 minutes of contact time** for maximum antimicrobial efficacy. Then repeat procedure with disposable towel saturated with water (or saline) to remove any soapy residue.
4. Likely areas of exposure include the abdomen and lower legs. **Wipe high-exposure areas** well.
5. Canine kennel/rest areas within transport vehicles should be **thoroughly wiped** down at the end of each shift in order to prevent cross-contamination.



In case of accidental ingestion:

ASPCA Poison Control Center (888) 426-4435
Pet Poison Helpline (855) 764-7661

Decontamination will always be situationally specific. In the event of suspected exposure to toxic chemicals or microbiological pathogens, contact your Supervising Officer and Veterinary support immediately.