

Clothing Decontamination

after Pepper Spray Exposure

Oleoresin capsicum sprays (“pepper sprays”) contain oils from hot peppers mixed with an emulsifier (an additive used to help two substances mix). They are designed to stick to skin and clothing. It is important that clothing be cleaned prior to re-use to prevent re-exposure.

Protect yourself when handling contaminated clothing by wearing plastic or rubber gloves. Discard them after use.

Washable Clothing:

Wash contaminated clothing separate from other clothes. Clothing which can safely be washed should be washed with laundry detergent in cool or cold water. It may take more than one washing to fully remove the capsicum oleoresin oils.

Non-washable Clothing:

Allow non-washable clothing to air dry for a few days. This will allow the oleoresin oils to decompose slightly before cleaning. Dry cleaning can be done once they are air dried for a few days. After drying, other non-washable items can be surface washed with a wet cloth, mild soap, and cool water or as the product label instructs for cleaning. Allow to dry completely prior to re-use.

Virginia Poison Center

VCU Health

Phone: (804) 828-4780

Web: poison.vcu.edu



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