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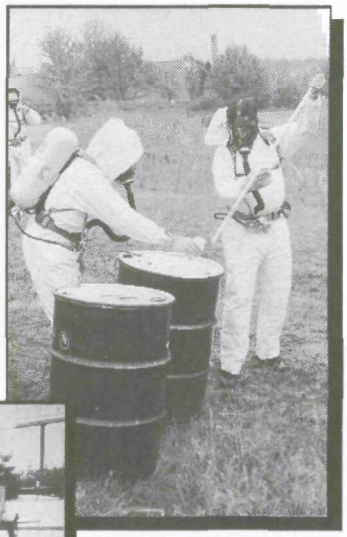
Superfund

EPA

An Overview of the Emergency Response Program



Preface

Industrial innovation and production have lifted the U.S. standard of living to a level of affluence earlier generations could only have imagined. This advancement has not come without a cost. Releases of oil and hazardous substances pose ever-present threats to our health and environment. Guarding against these threats has been an integral part of EPA's mission since the Agency was created in 1970.

Some large-scale contaminated sites require long-term cleanups. All too often, however, hazards at these sites or threats from spills, fires, and explosions require emergency response.

This brochure provides an overview of EPA's program for emergency response to releases of oil and hazardous substances. It is intended as an introduction -- not a fully detailed guide -- to the Agency's emergency response activities. The brochure covers the Federal laws and regulations that authorize emergency response, explains EPA's role in managing and conducting responses, and indicates the techniques and technologies that the Agency uses to address the threats posed by environmental emergencies.

After reading this brochure, you may want to learn more about responses to environmental emergencies that have occurred or might occur in your area. The brochure lists a number of sources of further information on this and other topics.

We hope you find this brochure interesting and informative.

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EPA's emergency response program is a part of the Agency's implementation of the **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA)**. (Highlighted terms are defined in the glossary that begins on page 22.) Also known as Superfund, this law was amended by the **Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986.** CERCLA established a "Superfund" to finance cleanup of the worst hazardous waste sites and set criteria for emergency notification of releases of hazardous substances.

Under its Superfund program, EPA conducts remedial actions (longer-term cleanups) and removal actions (short-term responses). Emergency response to hazardous substance releases are removal actions.

Emergency response to oil spills is authorized by the **Clean Water Act**, as amended by the **Oil Pollution Act of 1990**. The relationship between hazardous substance and oil spill response is reflected in the **National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan**, a set of Federal regulations that integrates requirements for responses to oil spills with requirements for responses to hazardous substance releases.

EPA's emergency response program is managed by the Emergency Response Division within the Office of Emergency and Remedial Response at EPA Headquarters. However, actual emergency response actions are conducted by **On-Scene Coordinators** and other front-line staff based in the ten EPA Regional offices throughout the United States. A map showing the EPA Regions and a list of EPA Regional emergency response offices is located on page 24.

EPA is one of several Federal agencies that manage the response to environmental incidents. The U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Energy, and others play key roles in responding to oil spills, hazardous substance releases, and radiological events.

An EPA representative chairs the **National Response Team**, an organization of 15 Federal agency representatives which coordinate national spill response and preparedness.

The National Response Team provides support to the **Regional Response Teams**, which include Federal and State representatives from each of the Regions. The Regional Response Teams are co-chaired by EPA and Coast Guard representatives. These teams coordinate regional spill response planning and preparedness, as well as direct support to On-Scene Coordinators.

For releases of national significance, EPA activates its **National Incident Coordination Team** to efficiently mobilize the full resources of the Agency and ensure rapid transfer of information within EPA.

EPA's **Environmental Response Team** is a group of scientists and engineers that provides 24-hour technical expertise to On-Scene Coordinators, State and local responders, and other countries in times of international environmental crisis. The Team's on-site support can include sampling and analysis, assessment of hazards, and evaluation and implementation of cleanup techniques. The Environmental Response Team also trains over 5,000 people each year for emergency response operations. Training courses cover worker health and safety and other aspects of identifying, evaluating, and controlling hazardous substance releases.

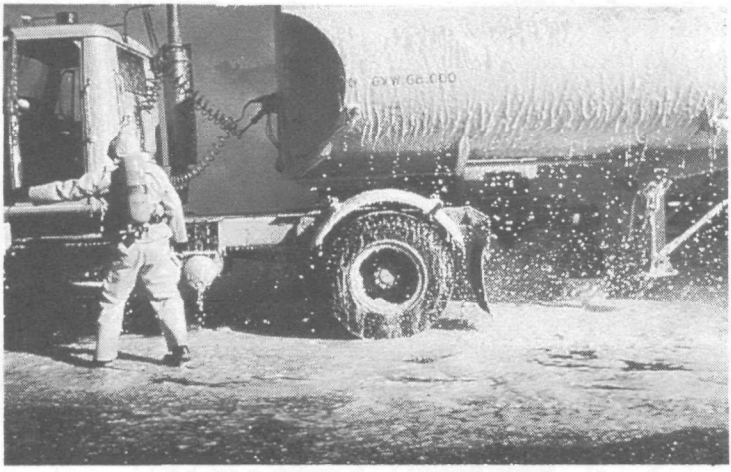
EPA's emergency response program is rounded out by a network of cleanup contractors strategically placed throughout the country to provide immediate cleanup capabilities. Technical Assistance Teams conduct site investigations and sampling, handle the required recordkeeping, and help the Agency provide information to the public. Actual site cleanups are managed by EPA and performed by companies contracted through the Agency's Emergency Response Cleanup Services.

Taken together, these efforts are designed to ensure prompt, safe, and effective EPA response to hazardous substance releases and oil spills. Regardless of who is responsible for cleanup and oversight, however, EPA maintains the capability and authority to provide a Federal presence at sites to ensure protection of public health and welfare and the environment.

Responding to Hazardous Substance Releases

Large-scale industrial production in the United States has generated vast quantities of hazardous substances. Prior to the 1970s, the U.S. paid little attention to the disposal of these industrial hazardous substances. As a result, hazardous substances often were buried in pits, dumped in ponds and lagoons, or mixed with non-hazardous waste in municipal landfills. The continuation of these practices over many years has resulted in the creation of tens of thousands of hazardous waste sites.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Federal, State, and local government officials and citizens became more aware that uncontrolled hazardous waste disposal threatened public health and our finite natural resources. As a result, previously limited legal and regulatory controls over hazardous waste disposal were expanded to include a number of comprehensive laws and regulations. These efforts are designed to clean up the mistakes of the past, cope with the hazardous substance emergencies of the present, and create guidelines for prudent hazardous waste management and disposal for the future.



EPA Emergency Response

EPA responds to a variety of hazardous substance threats, including releases from facilities, vessels, and abandoned hazardous waste sites.

Laws and Regulations

Federal authority to respond to releases of hazardous substances into U.S. waters is found in section 311 of the **Clean Water Act**, which was originally enacted in 1970. However, the Clean Water Act provides only limited authority and funds to EPA and the U.S. Coast Guard to tackle the problems caused by releases to land, water, and air.

To provide a more effective response to these kinds of problems, Congress enacted the **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA)**, popularly known as Superfund. CERCLA's primary goal includes emergency response to hazardous substances released into the environment.

Congress strengthened the foundation of the Superfund program in 1986 when it enacted the **Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA)**. SARA provides the Federal government with increased enforcement powers against responsible parties to compel them to meet their legal obligations of reporting releases of hazardous substances and funding cleanup efforts.

Congress also passed the **Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA)** in 1986 as Title III of SARA. SARA Title III expands the role of State and local governments and citizens in emergency planning processes and emphasizes the importance of emergency response planning and training programs.

The Superfund Trust Fund

The Superfund trust fund was created as an important component of CERCLA to give the Federal government flexibility in identifying and addressing potentially harmful releases of hazardous substances. The fund is derived from taxes on petroleum and the production of a number of commercial chemicals. The Superfund enables EPA and the Coast Guard to respond immediately to hazardous substance releases and contamination problems that

pose a threat to public health and the environment. The Agency may seek repayment later from the party or parties responsible for the release.

The philosophy behind Superfund is that protecting public health and the environment from the risks of hazardous substance releases requires a timely response action; a delayed response can compound the problem and cost more money in the long run.

Reporting Releases of Hazardous Substances

As soon as the person in charge of a facility or vessel knows that a hazardous substance has been released in a **reportable quantity (RQ)** or more into the environment, he or she must immediately notify the **National Response Center (NRC)** at (800) 424-8802. In addition, SARA Title III requires that the owner or

EPA OSCs Respond to Inland Spills

The National Response Center immediately notifies the appropriate Federal OSC of a release of a hazardous substance. The OSC coordinates all Federal response efforts during an incident.

operator of a facility report such releases to the appropriate **State emergency response commission (SERC)** and **local emergency planning committee (LEPC)**. You can obtain a list of SERC and LEPC contacts by calling the EPCRA Hotline at (800) 535-0202.

Notification of a release triggers the National Response System, a network of Federal, State, local, and private sector roles and responsibilities for responding to releases of hazardous substances. (See the opposite page for an overview of the National Response System.)

When the National Response Center is notified, the duty officer relays the release information to an EPA or Coast Guard **On-Scene Coordinator (OSC)**, depending on the location and nature of the release. After receiving a report of a hazardous substance release, the Federal OSC evaluates the risk based on the circumstances of the release. All notifications to the Federal government are subsequently collected in the automated **Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS)**.

What is an RQ?

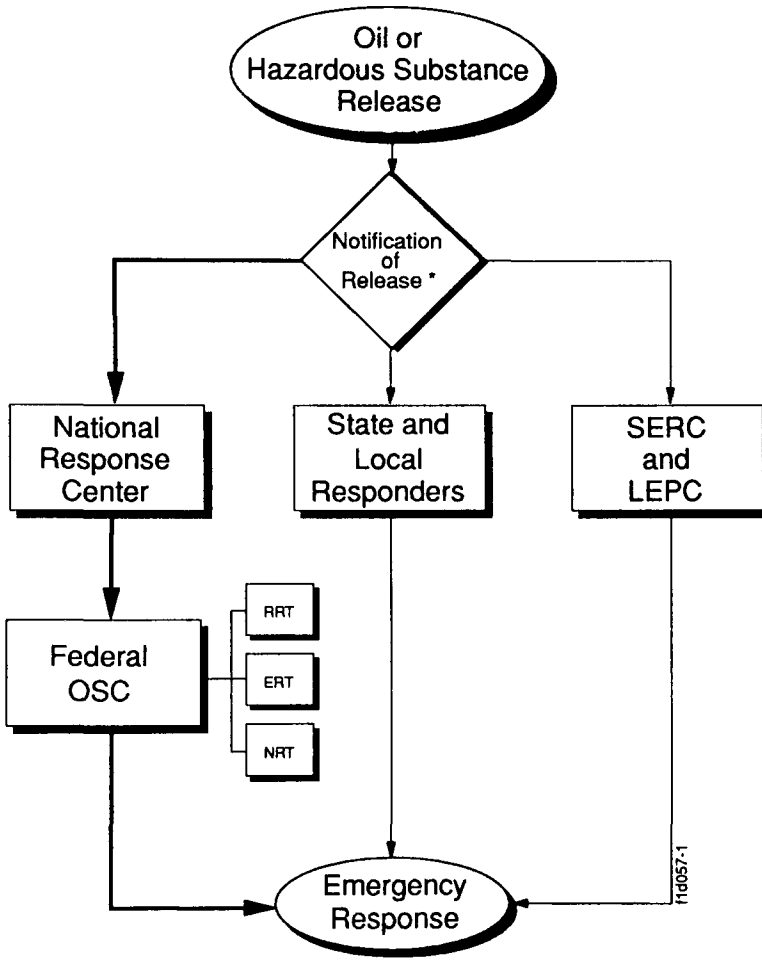
Each hazardous substance has a reportable quantity, or RQ. An RQ is a quantity of the hazardous substance, the release of which triggers Federal (CERCLA, SARA Title III, and Clean Water Act) reporting requirements.

Generally, there are five RQ levels: 1, 10, 100, 1000, and 5000 pounds. Radionuclides are assigned RQs ranging from 10^{-3} to 10^{3} curies.

RQs are applicable to all hazardous substance releases to land, air, ground water, and surface water.

A list of hazardous substances and RQs may be found in Volume 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) in Part 302 (Table 302.4 and Appendices A and B).

Overview of the National Response System



* Under Title III of SARA, notification to the State emergency response commission (SERC) and local emergency planning committee (LEPC) is required for releases of hazardous substances but not for discharges of oil.

The Federal Role

The Federal response process begins with the OSC's decision to initiate response measures. This decision is based on a preliminary assessment of notification information and on follow-up data gathered from the site.

Once the OSC decides that the Federal government is the appropriate response agency, he or she must then decide what type of response to make: whether the release should be contained to prevent migration and treated in place, or whether off-site disposal or treatment should be undertaken.

When necessary, expertise of other Federal agencies can be brought to a response action through the **National Response Team** and the **Regional Response Teams.** The Federal OSC also may seek assistance from other States, the EPA Regional offices, or the **Environmental Response Team.** State agencies or the parties responsible for a release may take the lead in cleaning it up when the OSC determines that Federal assistance is not necessary. In these cases, the Federal OSC may retain the authority for oversight or monitoring of the operations to ensure that the threat is properly mitigated.

Site-Specific Response Activities

The **National Contingency Plan** provides the guidelines and procedures for responses to hazardous substances, and authorizes EPA to conduct two types of response activities: removal actions and remedial actions.

Removal actions are short-term, relatively low-cost actions that EPA can take in response to a release or a threat of a release of a hazardous substance that poses an immediate danger to public health or the environment. Remedial actions are longer-

term efforts to select a remedy and more fully clean up the site. The Agency's emergency response program, the focus of this pamphlet, is responsible for carrying out removal actions.

Examples of situations that might require a removal action include: fires or explosions, threat of human exposure to a hazardous substance, contamination of a drinking water supply, or releases from abandoned facilities. If a preliminary assessment of the situation shows that there is an immediate threat and that no other capable authority can respond in a timely manner, a removal action may be the appropriate solution to the problem.

Removal actions are limited by CERCLA to one year and $2 million. Although the National Contingency Plan reflects these time and spending limits, exemptions may be obtained when a continued response is required to prevent or mitigate an emergency, or when further response actions are appropriate and consistent with the remedial action to be taken.

The National Contingency Plan

In response to an accident involving the *Torrey Canyon* tanker off the coast of England in March 1967, the first National Contingency Plan was published in 1968.

Although initially developed to coordinate responses to oil spills, Congress broadened the scope of the National Contingency Plan over the years to address releases of hazardous substances as well, including releases requiring longer-term remedial actions and short-term removal actions.

The National Contingency Plan provides the framework for the National Response System by facilitating national planning, coordination, and response through the National Response Team, Regional Response Teams, and Federal On-Scene Coordinators. The National Contingency Plan may be found in 40 CFR Part 300.

Removal actions can involve many different activities to stabilize or eliminate the threat posed by a release, including:

- Excavating or pumping hazardous substances for treatment or disposal off-site;
- Providing alternate water supplies;
- Treating hazardous substances on-site;
- Relocating residents temporarily; and
- Installing fences to reduce the migration of hazardous substances and to prevent human contact.

After abating these immediate threats, EPA may undertake remedial actions to clean up the more complex environmental problems at sites.

An example of a Federal emergency response to a release of a hazardous substance is provided on the next page.

Anatomy of a Hazardous Substance Response

Emergency: At a chemical manufacturing facility, chlorine is used to bleach dye from wastewater before discharging the water into a sewer. The chlorine is stored as a liquid in a pressurized, 30-ton capacity above-ground storage tank. At 4:30 a.m., Saturday, a control valve on the tank fails and liquid chlorine is released at a rate of about 200 pounds per hour (the reportable quantity for chlorine is 10 pounds). The pool of chlorine quickly vaporizes, resulting in a toxic cloud of chlorine gas drifting toward nearby residents.

Notification: The night supervisor discovers the release at 4:40 a.m. and dials 911 immediately to summon the local police and fire department. The supervisor then calls the National Response Center, State emergency response commission, and local emergency planning committee to report the release, as specified in the facility's response plan. Within seconds, the National Response Center relays the information to the predesignated EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC).

Response: The police and fire department arrive at the facility at 4:48 a.m. After surveying the scene, the fire department calls in its hazardous materials team for assistance. The EPA OSC -- enroute to the site -- telephones the fire department for details on the spill; about 100 pounds of chlorine have already been released and several local residents are indicating respiratory problems. The local responders begin a dual response: repairing the valve and evacuating the area. The OSC arrives at the site at 6:30 a.m. The local responders are unable to repair the valve and request Federal assistance. After conferring with the police and finding that evacuation is proceeding slowly, the OSC determines that the release is beyond the capacity and resources of the local responders, and that Federal assistance is needed. At 6:45 a.m., the OSC telephones the EPA Regional office to get backup response personnel and equipment. The OSC then calls the Environmental Response Team for special engineering expertise on sealing the valve and coordinates with State authorities to get National Guardsmen to assist with the evacuation. Chlorine response experts start to arrive on site at 7:45 a.m.; they successfully seal the valve by 7:59 a.m. At 8:20 a.m., the Federal responders, wearing protective equipment, contain the remaining liquid chlorine to prevent further evaporation. More than 800 pounds of chlorine were released. The OSC arranges for trained medical personnel to be brought in to treat the residents for chlorine exposure. Once the area is secure, the OSC oversees site cleanup by contractors hired by the facility owners.

Oil Spill Response

The large, environmentally devastating oil spills of recent years -- such as the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* incident -- have underscored the need for prompt, effective government and private sector response. Oil spills kill and injure plants and wildlife, and can often upset delicate ecological balances. This environmental damage can threaten public health and welfare by endangering drinking water supplies and ruining commercial fishing industries.

With oversight by the **On-Scene Coordinator (OSC)**, the party responsible for the spill may spend millions of dollars to clean up the spill, restore damaged natural resources, and pay penalties.

As many people know from news coverage of spills such as the *Exxon Valdez*, the U.S. Coast Guard is in charge of response to coastal spills. What many people do not realize, however, is that EPA responds to oil spills to inland waters (e.g., rivers, lakes) and adjoining

Collapsed Oil Tank

EPA leads responses to inland spills, which can be as damaging as those that occur at sea. When this tank ruptured, it released about one million gallons of oil into two nearby rivers.

shorelines. These inland spills can be as catastrophic as the more publicized coastal incidents. The 1988 collapse of an above-ground oil storage tank in Pennsylvania released almost one million gallons of diesel fuel into the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers, disrupting water supplies, forcing the closing of schools and businesses, and inflicting serious ecological damage.

Laws and Regulations

EPA carries out its oil spill response activities as part of its responsibilities under section 311 of the **Clean Water Act**. Specifically, section 311 provides for oil spill reporting, response, enforcement, and funding -- and for measures to prevent oil spills from happening in the first place. These Clean Water Act provisions were expanded upon and strengthened by the **Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA)**. The oil spill regulations that EPA has issued to fulfill its Clean Water Act duties have two basic purposes: preventing spills from occurring, and ensuring a quick, effective cleanup of spills that do occur.

Laws for Oil Spill Response: The Clean Water Act

Section 311 of the Clean Water Act was amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to require that EPA and the Coast Guard direct responses to oil spills that pose a substantial threat to public health and welfare. The Oil Pollution Act also added a requirement that vessels and fixed facilities prepare plans to prevent oil spills and to respond to spills that do occur.

Other provisions of section 311 of the Clean Water Act authorize EPA and the Coast Guard to:

- Establish criteria for notifying the Federal government of discharges of oil into U.S. waters;
- Direct and conduct responses to oil spills;
- Assess civil and criminal penalties for violation of oil spill laws; and
- Administer a Federal oil spill response fund.

Prevention: The Best Response

The easiest and simplest way to avoid the environmental and economic costs of oil spills is to keep them from happening in the first place.

The Agency's **Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) regulation** requires certain non-transportation-related facilities (e.g., storage facilities, refineries) that store oil to prepare plans for the prevention and containment of oil spills. The U.S. Department of Transportation regulates transportation-related facilities (e.g., pipelines, shoreline loading facilities for vessels).

Under the Agency's SPCC program, EPA OSCs, States, and Technical Assistance Teams inspect hundreds of facilities each year. Inspectors examine the layout, organization, and structure of the facility and review the facility's SPCC plan to ensure compliance with the regulation.

Planning for an Oil Spill

Despite prevention efforts, oil spills do occur. Therefore, it is most important to be ready with a plan for minimizing the size of the spill and the amount of damage it causes. The **National Contingency Plan** requires that Federal, State, and local officials as well as responsible parties plan for and work together to clean up spills quickly and effectively.

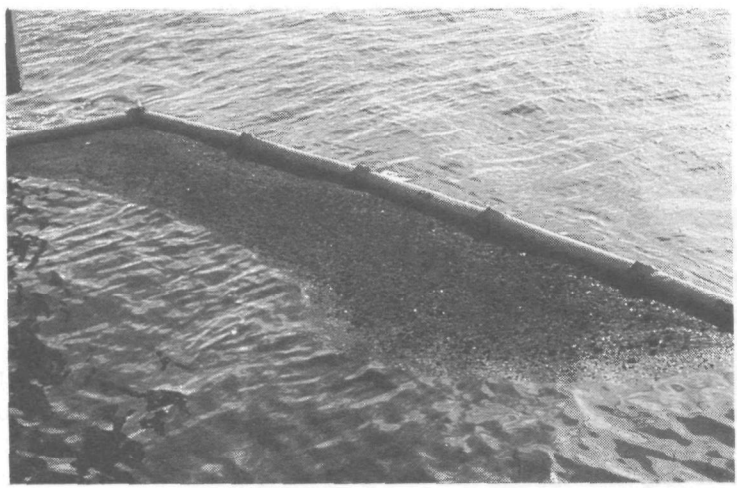
Under the Clean Water Act, as amended by the OPA, facility owners and operators must have specific plans for response to a worst-case spill from their facilities. Periodically, EPA also inspects facilities' spill removal equipment. The OPA requires EPA and other Federal, State, and local officials to develop spill response plans for every inland area of the U.S. These Area Contingency Plans facilitate the coordination of response efforts when spills do occur. The OPA planning and inspection requirements assure

that both government and responsible parties are prepared to respond effectively to dangerous spills.

When an Oil Spill Occurs

The Discharge of Oil Regulation (also known as the "sheen" rule under the Clean Water Act) states that whenever an oil spill occurs in U.S. waters that causes a discoloration or sheen on the surface of a body of water, the person in charge of the facility or vessel responsible for the spill must notify the **National Response Center** immediately at (800) 424-8802.

If the spill is in inland waters, the National Response Center will relay the information by telephone to an EPA OSC in the appropriate EPA Regional office so that the Agency can assess whether and how it should respond. (See page 24 for a map of EPA Regions and a list of EPA Regional emergency response offices.)



Boom Contains Spilled Oil

Boom is used as a floating barrier to contain oil until it can be removed.

Biological Techniques Hold Promise for Oil Spill Cleanups

Application of nutrients to oil-contaminated beaches can be used to enhance the natural degradation of oil in the environment.

EPA directs any responses to inland spills that pose a substantial threat to the public health or welfare, and has the authority to respond to any other discharges. Even where other State or Federal agencies assume control of the response, EPA provides advice and monitors response efforts.

OSCs consider and apply a full range of resources and methods for responding to spills.

Mechanical methods -- booms, skimmers, and containers -- may be used to recover the spilled oil and to store the oil until it can be disposed of or reused. Mechanical containment or

recovery is the most common type of response action.

Chemical treatments may be employed to coagulate the oil for easier collection, or to direct the oil to a less sensitive location by dispersing it into tiny droplets. **Biological techniques** such as the introduction of microbes or microbe nutrients may be used to promote the natural microbial consumption and decomposition of oil.

The Agency maintains a list of chemical and biological products -- the **National Contingency Plan Product Schedule** -- that may be approved and used on particular spills. The list provides data available on the products, thus ensuring that responders have certain baseline information to use in their decision making.

EPA and the Coast Guard seek to recover spill response costs and damages from responsible parties whenever possible. When the party responsible for a spill cannot be determined or does not have the funds to cover response costs, the costs may be paid from the **Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund**. Fund monies are supplied by a five-cent-per-barrel fee on domestic and imported oil. The Fund provides up to $1 billion per incident for cleanup costs and other damages.

An example of a Federal response to an inland oil spill is provided on the next page.

Anatomy of an Oil Spill Response

Emergency: At an oil refinery, crude oil is transferred from barges on the adjacent river to above-ground storage tanks located on shore. At 4:30 p.m., a pipeline used in the transfer process ruptures and releases 600,000 gallons of crude oil into the river. The discharged oil forms a slick that spreads quickly. A fishery is located 10 miles downstream; three industrial facilities with cooling water intakes on the river are 15 miles downstream. The oil, flowing on the river at .75 knots, will reach the fishery in about 11 hours.

Notification: At 4:50 p.m., the barge operators discover the leak in the pipeline and radio the facility. The foreman, in accordance with the facility's response plan, immediately notifies the local authorities and calls the National Response Center to report the release. The National Response Center, in turn, relays the information to the predesignated EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC).

Response: At 5:00 p.m., the barge operators are able to stop the flow of crude oil through the pipeline by closing a valve; the oil slick moves steadily downstream. At 6:15 p.m., the facility's response contractors and the local responders begin to lay expandi-boom to divert the oil from the shore and contain the slick; however, the supply of boom is short by 1,000 feet. The OSC arrives at 7:30 p.m. to assess the situation. After consulting with facility representatives and local responders, the OSC determines that the slick poses a serious threat to the fishery and to the industrial facilities, which could be adversely impacted if oil were to enter their intakes. The OSC decides that Federal assistance is necessary to contain the spill. After consulting with the Environmental Response Team on the ecological impact of dispersants, the OSC rejects their use because of sensitive biota in the river; the OSC feels that the quantity of dispersants needed for treatment may threaten the fishery. The OSC contacts the EPA Regional office to obtain additional equipment to assist the facility in mechanical removal of the oil. The OSC determines that the facility's response contractors are short about 30 floating and hand-held skimmers and have no small vessels available. The extra boom and skimmers are flown by air to the scene at 9:30 p.m.; vessels are rented from the area fishermen. The OSC and other responders work quickly to lay the additional boom and begin skimming the oil to get the spill under control before it reaches the fishery and facilities downstream. By 12:00 a.m., the oil is successfully contained. The OSC remains at the scene during the next two weeks to oversee the remaining mechanical removal of the oil. Cleanup of the shorelines by the facility contractors continues for several months with EPA oversight.

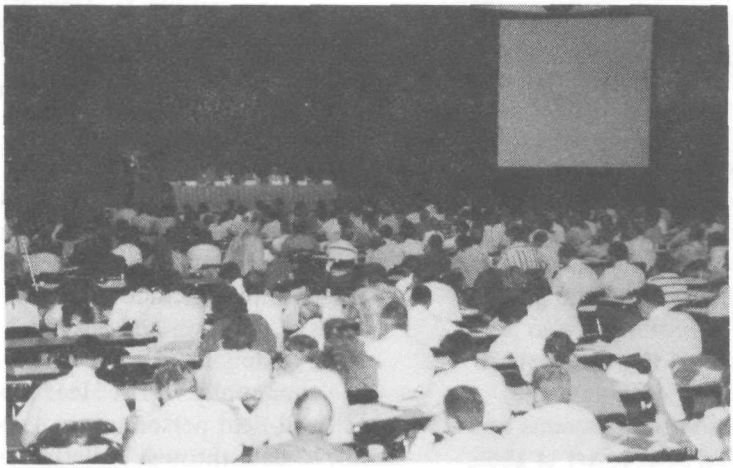
Getting Involved

EPA plays a vital role in protecting our environment, but this cannot be accomplished without assistance and cooperation from the public. Some important responsibilities of local communities are to notify the **National Response Center** ((800) 424-8802) of any emergency incidents, be prepared for releases that do occur, assist with the response, and generally stay informed.

The Agency works with the public by informing local communities of emergency incidents and resulting response actions.

Informing the Community

The Agency responds to the public's need for information by answering questions directly, making presentations, and preparing and distributing publications. The **National Contingency Plan** describes specific requirements for community relations and public participation in emergency responses to releases of oil and hazardous substances.



Discussing the Regulations

Thousands of members of industry, other regulatory agencies, and the general public have attended EPA workshops to learn how to comply with Federal requirements for reporting releases of hazardous substances and oil spills.

In the case of removal actions at hazardous waste sites, for example, EPA appoints a spokesperson who notifies the community of specific response actions, answers any questions, and updates the residents on progress at the site. An administrative record, or a repository of information on the site, must be established within 60 days. If the removal action is expected to continue for more than 120 days, the spokesperson will interview community groups to identify their concerns and prepare a community relations plan to address these concerns.

Taking Responsibility in Cleanup

In cleaning up oil spills or hazardous substance releases, EPA notifies the parties potentially responsible for the release to involve them as appropriate in the process. Local governments also are encouraged to participate in the response. Under the **Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986**, the Agency established a reimbursement program to help local governments cope with expenses that significantly exceed funds available for temporary emergency response measures.

Workshops and Publications

The Agency conducts workshops and seminars to keep Federal, State, and local regulators, the regulated community, trade groups, and the general public informed about EPA regulations and programs. EPA uses lectures, handout materials, question-and-answer sessions, hypothetical release scenarios, and computer demonstrations to convey important information.

EPA also prepares and distributes informational materials on releases of oil and hazardous substances, cleanup efforts, and related issues to a wide variety of audiences. Some examples include journal articles and question-and-answer booklets for the regulated community. EPA Headquarters and field personnel are kept up-to-date through bulletins on statutory requirements, response activities, and new regulations and policies.

For Further Information

If you would like more information on how EPA's emergency response program works, please contact your EPA Regional office (see page 24 for a map of EPA Regions and a list of EPA Regional emergency response offices).

For answers to any technical or regulatory questions concerning emergency response to oil and hazardous substance releases, please contact the toll-free RCRA/Superfund Hotline at (800) 424-9346, or (703) 920-9810 in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know (EPCRA) Information Hotline will answer your questions concerning SARA Title III and chemical accident prevention issues; call toll-free at (800) 535-0202, or (703) 920-9877 in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Specific questions on ERNS, the SPCC regulation, as well as requests for the National Contingency Plan Product Schedule, may be directed to the Emergency Response Division's Information Line at (202) 260-2342.

For printed information on CERCLA and SARA Title III, such as copies of rulemakings, as well as records supporting rulemakings, call the Agency's Superfund Docket at (202) 260-3046.

The Public Information Center at the Agency answers inquiries from the public about EPA, its programs, and activities. For a variety of general, non-technical information call (202) 260-7751.

Glossary

Biological techniques, such as the introduction of microbes or microbe nutrients, are used to respond to oil spills because they decompose oil naturally.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) created "Superfund" to finance cleanup of the worst hazardous waste sites and set criteria for emergency notification of hazardous substance releases.

Chemical treatments are products that coagulate spilled oil for easier collection or that direct the oil to a less sensitive location.

Clean Water Act (CWA) provides for Federal response to releases of oil and certain hazardous substances into the waters of the United States.

Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA) was passed by Congress as Title III of SARA, expanding the role of State and local governments and citizens in preparing for emergencies and managing chemical risks.

Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) is a national computer data base that stores information on releases of oil and hazardous substances collected from reports made to the NRC.

Environmental Response Team (ERT) is a group of EPA experts based in Edison, New Jersey and Cincinnati, Ohio, that assists OSCs with sampling, hazard assessment, and cleanup techniques.

Local emergency planning committee (LEPC) is appointed by the SERC as part of local emergency planning districts. The LEPC serves as a focal point for SARA Title III community activities.

Mechanical methods are the most common type of response actions used to recover spilled oil. Equipment includes booms, sorbents, and floating and hand-held skimmers that are used to contain and collect oil spills.

National Incident Coordination Team (NICT) coordinates Agency response actions and communications during extraordinary emergency situations of national or international significance.

National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) provides guidelines for implementing CERCLA, the CWA, and the OPA, and authorizes EPA and others to conduct cleanups of oil and hazardous substance releases. The NCP may be found in 40 CFR Part 300.

National Response Center (NRC) is the primary Federal point of contact for reporting releases of oil and hazardous substances. The NRC is staffed by the U.S. Coast Guard 24 hours a day.

National Response Team (NRT) is a national planning, policy, and coordinating body on emergency response to pollution incidents. Membership is drawn from 15 Federal organizations.

NCP Product Schedule is a list of chemical and biological products that may be approved for use on certain oil spills.

Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) was created to expand upon and strengthen the CWA by ensuring a quick, effective response to oil spills.

Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund provides up to $1 billion to cover response costs for an emergency incident in cases where responsible parties are unknown or do not have the funds to cover the costs. A five-cent-per-barrel fee on oil supplies these monies.

On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) is a predesignated Federal official who oversees response activities at oil spills and hazardous substance releases. The OSC ensures that the response is appropriate, timely, minimizes environmental damage, and protects public health.

Regional Response Team (RRT) is a planning, policy, and coordinating body, like the NRT, which provides assistance as requested by the OSC during an emergency response.

Reportable quantity (RQ) is an amount of a hazardous substance that triggers CERCLA and SARA Title III emergency release reporting requirements.

Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) regulation requires certain non-transportation-related facilities that store oil to prepare prevention and containment plans.

State emergency response commission (SERC) is appointed by each State to ensure that SARA Title III emergency planning and implementation is developed.

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) strengthened and clarified EPA's enforcement authorities and responsibilities under Superfund.

EPA Regional Emergency Response Offices

EPA Region 1
Emergency Planning and Response Branch
60 Westview Street
Lexington, MA 02173
(617) 860-4361 or (FTS) 828-6461

EPA Region 2
Response and Prevention Branch
2890 Woodbridge Avenue
Raritan Depot, Building 209
Edison, NJ 08837
(908) 321-6657 or (FTS) 340-6657

EPA Region 3
Superfund Removal Branch
841 Chestnut Street, 9th floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 597-0992 or (FTS) 597-0992

EPA Region 4
Emergency Response and Removal Branch
345 Courtland Street, NE, 1st floor
Atlanta, GA 30365
(404) 347-3931 or (FTS) 257-3931

EPA Region 5
Emergency and Enforcement Response Branch
230 South Dearborn Street, 11th floor
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 886-6236 or (FTS) 886-6236

EPA Region 6
Emergency Response Branch
1445 Ross Avenue, 9th Floor
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
(214) 655-2270 or (FTS) 255-2270

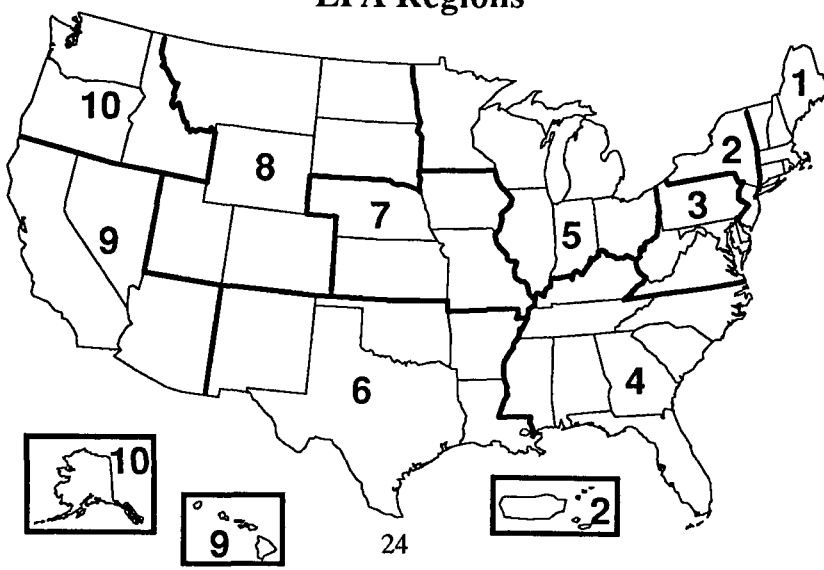
EPA Region 7
Emergency Planning and Response Branch
25 Funston Road, 2nd floor
Kansas City, KS 66115
(913) 551-5000 or (FTS) 276-5000

EPA Region 8
Emergency Response Branch
999 18th Street, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80202-2405
(303) 293-1788 or (FTS) 330-1238

EPA Region 9
Field Operations Branch
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 744-1500 or (FTS) 484-1500

EPA Region 10
Superfund Branch
1200 6th Avenue, 11th floor
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 553-1679 or (FTS) 399-1679

EPA Regions



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