



CERCLA Notifications

Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) Fact Sheet

Office of Emergency and Remedial Response
Emergency Response Division OS-210

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

The Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS) provides a mechanism for documenting and verifying release notification information as initially reported to the National Response Center (NRC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and, to a limited extent, to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) for response decisions. This initial notification data may be followed up by various Federal, State and local response authorities, as appropriate. ERNS contains data that can be used to analyze release notifications and spills, support emergency planning efforts, and assist decision makers in developing spill prevention programs. This fact sheet provides summary information on notifications of releases of hazardous substances regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), as amended.

CERCLA Section 103 requires that the release of a CERCLA hazardous substance, meeting or exceeding the CERCLA reportable quantity, be reported to the NRC. There are currently 783 substances designated as CERCLA hazardous substances under 40 CFR Part 302. These CERCLA notifications account for approximately 17 percent of the total number of notifications found in ERNS.

RELEASE NOTIFICATIONS IN ERNS*

Notification Type:	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
CERCLA	4,582	5,060	6,554	6,174	5,885
Oil	15,577	15,167	16,074	18,846	19,264
Other	8,518	9,647	11,476	9,239	10,504
Total for Year	28,677	29,874	34,104	34,259	35,653

CERCLA: Substances designated as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended, section 103.

Oil: As defined by section 311 of the CWA, any oil discharge which: 1) causes a sheen to appear on the surface of the water; 2) violates applicable water quality standards; or 3) causes sludge or emulsion to be deposited beneath the surface of the water or upon the adjoining shorelines. This includes both petroleum and non-petroleum oil products.

Other: This category includes non-CERCLA, non-oil substances along with substances that could not be identified at the time of the release.

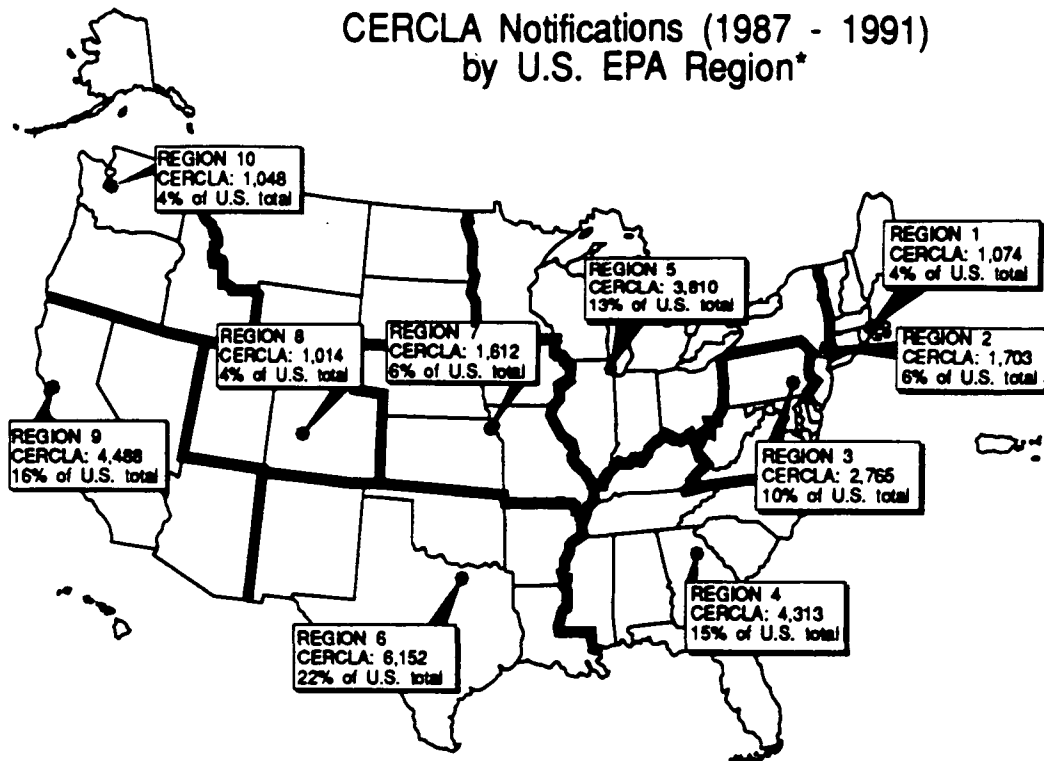
The following table shows the size distribution of CERCLA notifications from 1987 to 1991. Notifications involving releases of less than 1,000 pounds account for approximately 71 percent of all CERCLA releases, while releases of greater than 100,000 pounds account for slightly more than 1 percent of these notifications.

Number of CERCLA Notifications by Quantity*

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
No quantity reported	715	775	0	0	0
Less than 1,000 lbs	2,750	2,992	5,082	4,774	4,588
1,000 - 9,999 lbs	748	846	1,001	945	875
10,000 - 99,999 lbs	313	373	379	383	355
100,000 lbs or greater	56	74	92	72	67

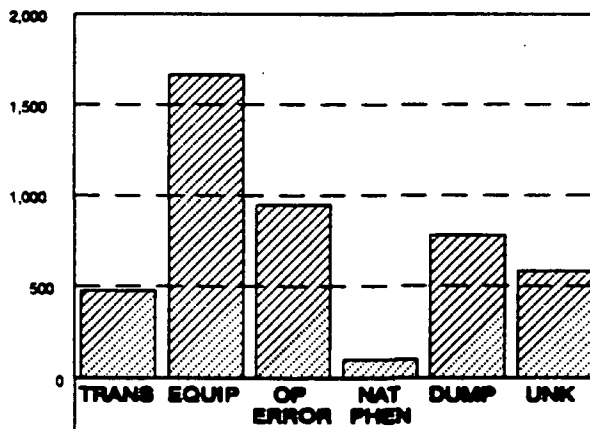
*All numbers are based on initial notifications to the Federal government and may not have been verified.

The primary purpose of ERNS is to collect and standardize notifications made to the Federal government of releases of oil and hazardous substances. These notifications are used by Federal On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) during, before, and after data are entered into ERNS to determine appropriate Federal response action. These data aid decision makers involving emergency response and release prevention issues. The following map shows the number and percentages of CERCLA hazardous substance releases found in ERNS for each of the ten U.S. EPA Regions. The data used in preparing the map are cumulative from 1987 to 1991.



ERNS may be used to examine the characteristics of hazardous substance release notifications. The bar chart provides an analysis of CERCLA hazardous substance releases sorted according to the reported cause of release. The six categories are: transportation accident, equipment failure, operator error, natural phenomenon, dumping and unknown.

CERCLA Hazardous Substance Releases by Cause*
(1987 - 1991)



For further information regarding ERNS, call the ERNS information line at (202) 260-2342, or write the ERNS Manager, U.S. EPA, at OS-210, 401 M St., SW, Washington DC 20460.

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