

Virginia  
Area Contingency Plan  
(VACP)

Hazardous Substance Response

Annex D  
March 2025

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**Record of Changes**

<b>Change Number</b>	<b>Change Description</b>	<b>Part Number</b>	<b>Change Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
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## Hazardous Substance Incident Annex

### Introduction

In accordance with the National Response Plan and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Coast Guard will serve as the Federal On-scene Coordinator (FOSC) for actual or potential releases of hazardous substances would:

- ☐ Impact public health and safety; and
- ☐ Enter the environment and originate from either vessels or facilities within the coastal zone.

### Purpose

This Annex is written to provide initial response guidance upon notification of a hazardous substance release in the coastal zone which may have actual, potential, or perceived consequences to public health or the environment.

If the hazardous substance release is suspected or confirmed to be the result of a terrorist act, response to the incident should be initiated using this Annex, the Terrorism Incident Annex and the Area Maritime Security Plan.

### Jurisdiction

The Coast Guard is the Federal On-scene Coordinator for any hazardous substance releases in the coastal zone that require emergency removal actions with the exception of incidents that:

- ☐ Occur from vessels or facilities owned, operated, or controlled by the Department of Defense (DOD) or Department of Energy (DOE); and
- ☐ Are *non-emergency* removal actions of hazardous substance releases from vessels or facilities owned, operated, or controlled by Federal agencies *other than* the DOD or DOE.

Under the CERCLA the Coast Guard Incident Commander (acting under their FOSC authority) has the authority to:

- ☐ Initiate a time critical assessment of the threat;
- ☐ Take the necessary steps to stabilize or control the immediately identified potential threat;
- ☐ Begin activating Federal scientific support agencies necessary to conduct an assessment (air, water, soil, or specific substance sampling in accordance with the relevant published sampling protocols and guidelines); and
- ☐ Initiate a response.

## Coast Guard Incident Commander Considerations

In most hazardous substance cases the On-scene Incident Commander will be from the local fire department or other local, county, or state agency. The Coast Guard Incident Commander's role is to:

- ☐ Determine if the incident requires the initiation of the Critical Incident Communications procedures; and
- ☐ Determine if the response is being managed by appropriate local authorities in a timely manner. (Fire departments are normally the lead agencies) and assess their need for Federal assistance.

If the response is being managed properly, provide Federal support as necessary to the on-scene Incident Commander through:

- ☐ Opening the CERCLA fund;
- ☐ Activating Basic Ordering Agreements with contractors;
- ☐ Providing technical support; or
- ☐ Deploying Coast Guard resources as needed (Atlantic Strike Team, vessels or aircraft).

If the response is not being managed properly by the responsible party, or is not managed in a timely manner, one of the following orders may be issued:

- ☐ An Administrative Order issued under CERCLA for "hazardous substance" releases when the FOSC has determined that there may be an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health and welfare or the environment. The FOSC must be reasonably certain that the party to whom is issued is in fact the Responsible Party.
- ☐ Captain of the Port Order issued to ensure the safety of vessels and waterfront facilities, and the protection of the navigable waters and the resources therein.

In the event that the Responsible Party:

- ☐ Cannot be identified, located, or contacted in a timely manner;
- ☐ Is either unwilling or unable to take responsibility and initiate removal actions;
- ☐ Is conducting removal actions which are inadequate, unsafe, and/or pose a hazard to public health and/or the environment; or
- ☐ Other agencies have not responded or are not available.

Then: Commander Sector Virginia will determine whether to federalize the removal actions. If federalized, the following actions should be taken:

- ☐ Engage in a coordinated and prompt response (The general rule for CERCLA is "First make it safe, then determine the extent of the hazard and Federal removal authorities");
- ☐ Contact the appropriate state agency's:
  - Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM);
  - Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ);
- ☐ Contact local/state authorities to secure the scene and establish exclusion zones;
- ☐ Access CERCLA funding;
- ☐ Consult the Base Plan Section 2050 for further Incident Commander actions;
- ☐ Conduct a removal site assessment to include:
  - Identification of the source;

- Determination of the threat to public health (resources that can assist with this determination include):
    - Agency for Toxic Substance Disease Registry (ATSDR); and
    - Local, County or State public health officials;
  - Evaluation of the magnitude of the threat;
  - Determination if actions have been taken to mitigate the release; and
  - Determination if there is potential of further release;
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- ☐ Designate the Potential Responsible Party(s);
  - ☐ Determine when removal actions are complete; and
  - ☐ If the site requires continued cleanup under the remediation phase, AND IS NOT A VESSEL, transfer the role of OSC to EPA Region III as appropriate.

### **Circumstances Where the Coast Guard Can Transfer OSC to the EPA**

The most common circumstances under which the Coast Guard OSC would transfer responsibilities to the EPA for action are when:

- ☐ The release originates from a Hazardous Waste Management Facility;
- ☐ The release does not require an immediate removal action;
- ☐ The site assessment determines that:
  - The release does not require immediate removal actions; or
  - Remedial actions are necessary to complete the cleanup;
- ☐ The threat of further release has been eliminated, prior to the completion of the cleanup; or
- ☐ Coast Guard policy requires that removal be secured when prompt action is no longer necessary and substantial remediation methods must be used to completely remove the remaining contamination.

When requesting a transfer of the OSC authority a “Statement of Agreement Transferring Federal On-Scene Coordinator Responsibility” shall document the transfer of authority.

**Notification** If the Coast Guard is receiving the initial notification:

- ☐ The information will be recorded in Sector Virginia’s Hazmat Incident Response Form.
- ☐ Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) will be notified;
- ☐ The National Response Center (NRC) will be contacted; and
- ☐ Appropriate local and state emergency communications centers will be notified to activate local protocols.

### **Dispatching Initial Coast Guard Response Personnel**

Safety is *always* the *primary consideration* when the determination is made to dispatch response personnel.

Prior to dispatching personnel ensure that the following are completed:

- ☐ Obtain information on the hazardous substance (consider the following potential sources of information).
  - Responsible Party (RP).
  - Reference material sources (list not inclusive):
    - Chemical Hazard Response Information System Manual COMDINST 16465.12C.
    - Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

- Supplied by PRP.
  - Websites: <http://msds.ehs.cornell.edu/msdssrch.asp>.  
<http://physchem.ox.ac.uk/MSDS/MSDS>.
  - Department of Transportation's Emergency Response Guidebook.
  - NIOSH Pocket Guide.
  - Atlantic Strike Team.
- ☐ Collect existing and forecast environmental conditions (wind direction, speed, precipitation, temperature, inversions, etc.).
- ☐ Determine nature of safety risk to responders consistent with environmental conditions. For example:
- Inhalation hazards are directly related to wind conditions & inversions.
  - Some chemicals, such as concentrated acids, react violently with water.
  - Vapor pressure and off-gassing increase with temperature.
- ☐ Determine, if established, the location of the Incident Command Post (ICP).
- If there is no ICP established, contact appropriate local authorities to isolate the hazard and establish a properly located and safe ICP.
  - If local or state Hazardous Materials Response Teams are unable to isolate and/or control the hazardous substance release, contact the Atlantic Strike Team to make entry and determine the exclusion, contamination reduction zone, and safe zone.
- ☐ Get directions to the ICP that provide a safe approach to prevent inadvertent entry into a contaminated area – and check the approach against your own assessment of wind direction/speed.
- ☐ Conduct an operational risk assessment to evaluate safety concerns using either:
- GAR 2.0 Model.
  - Operational Hazard Work Sheet.
- ☐ Ensure appropriate protective equipment is available:
- Emergency Escape Breathing Apparatus (EEBA).
  - Appropriate respirator and cartridge.
  - Toxi-clip.
  - Oxygen meter.
  - Four-gas meter.

### **Actions upon Arriving On-scene**

- ☐ Meet with the On-scene Incident Commander at the Incident Command Post.
- ☐ Determine the extent of the emergency (hazards) and actions taken to mitigate the incident.
- ☐ Determine with the IC, any need for Federal assistance.
- ☐ Meet with the PRP representative on scene and determine their willingness to conduct removal actions on behalf of the FOSC.
- ☐ Obtain and record the following information on the unit's Hazmat Incident Response Form:
  - Information on site security and control.
  - Availability of the Emergency Response Plan.
  - Availability of the Site Safety Plan.
  - Hazardous Materials response teams available or on scene.
  - Appropriate use of personal protective equipment.
  - The Air monitoring Plan
  - Cleanup and disposal procedures.

### **For all Federalized Removal Actions (at a facility or on a vessel)**

The Unified Command should consider the following priorities, objectives and determinations when responding to a hazardous substance release.

#### **Unified Command Priorities**

- ☐ Responder safety.
- ☐ Rescue decontamination and treatment of injured or potentially exposed persons
- ☐ Source Control/Incident Stabilization.
- ☐ Public safety/hazard mitigation.
- ☐ Protection from direct exposure, possible evacuations (evacuation determinations are generally a local government decision).
- ☐ Protection of water intakes.
- ☐ Protection of underground drinking water aquifers.
- ☐ Consider neutralizing agents prior to cleanup.
- ☐ Environmental cleanup/restoration.
- ☐ Proper transportation, storage and disposal of contaminated debris & waste.

#### **Unified Command Considerations for an Incident Involving a Vessel**

- ☐ Determine the need to triage, treat, transport, decontaminate, and/or evacuate passengers and non-essential crew.
- ☐ Establish a safety zone.
- ☐ Vessel stability.
- ☐ If the vessel is underway, consult the "Places of Refuge Plan" in the ACP to determine whether to bring the vessel into port and to determine the best location.
- ☐ Determine if an offensive or defensive strategy will be used and what resources will be needed to employ the strategy selected.
- ☐ If the vessel is on fire, consult the Marine Fire Fighting and SAR Plan.
- ☐ Activate Tri-state Maritime Safety Association/MIRT Response Team.

#### **Unified Command Organization**

The Hazardous Substance Incident Organization Chart represents agencies that may support a hazardous substance release response operation and where they may potentially work in a Unified Command organization. If there is a suspected or actual terrorist threat associated with the incident, then this information should be used in conjunction with the Unified Command organization structure outlined in the Terrorism Incident Annex.

### Special Teams

Additional special teams can be found in the Special Teams Handbook.

The following special teams are equipped to respond to hazardous substance incidents, and should be considered as potential response resources:

- ☐ EPA Environmental Response Team (ERT).
- ☐ USCG Atlantic Strike Team (AST).
- ☐ OSHA (Region 3 - Virginia).
- ☐ Agency for Toxic Substance Disease Registry.
- ☐ NOAA.
- ☐ Commonwealth of Virginia State Hazardous Materials Response Teams
- ☐ 34<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team (Virginia).
- ☐ DOD Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosive Team.

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1 See also Oil and Hazardous Materials Incident Annex in the NRP.

2 The term hazardous substance is defined in CERCLA § 101. A list of hazardous substances can be found in 40 CFR 302.4

3 The term *facility*, as defined under CERCLA Section 101(9), encompasses virtually any entity except vessels “where a hazardous substance has been deposited, stored, disposed of, or placed, or otherwise came to be located.” This includes buildings, shipping containers, drums, vehicles, aircraft and drainage ditches. If hazardous substances were released from a vessel and sank to the bottom of the Delaware River, the vessel would not be considered a *facility*, but the affected area of the river bottom where the hazardous substance has accumulated would be considered as such