Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	**2**	**Calendar Year:**	**2022**
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USCG RRT Co-Chair:	**Joseph Boudrow**	**Email:**	**Joseph.A.Boudrow@uscg.mil**
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A. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.	11 Jan 2022	Virtual	116 (approx.)	www.nrt.org/RRT2January2022

B. Activations / Notifications – NO RRT ACTIVATIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS REPORT

1.	**Dates:**	8/10-17/22	**Event:**	TA Truck Stop Air Release; East Greenwich, NJ	**ACT**		**NOT**	X
	Issue / Concern:	Tanker truck venting zinc alkyl dithiophosphate at truck stop.						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, NJ DEP, Gloucester, Camden and Salem Counties						
	Decisions Made:	On August 11, 2022 at 0015 hours, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) requested EPA air monitoring support at the TA Truck stop in East Greenwich, Gloucester County, New Jersey. At around 1600 hours on August 10, a truck at the truck stop carrying approximately 7,000 gallons of zinc alkyl dithiophosphate, also called Lubrizol 1395, began venting and causing a very strong rotten egg smell. Gloucester County and neighboring Salem and Camden Counties officials received hundreds of odor complaint calls and advised people in the area to limit outdoor activities and remain in their homes. Camden County Hazmat connected a hose to the heating element of the tanker and pumped water via a fire hydrant in order to cool the thermal decomposition. TransChem USA hired a consultant company to provide continuous roving air-monitoring both within the confines of the TA Travel Center property as well as the surrounding community. In addition, a cleanup company was hired to address the venting. An air-scrubber unit was attached to the pressure release valve. Local officials lifted the shelter in place for residents on August 12, 2022. On August 13th, the pressure release valve finally closed, and the tanker's pressure gauge indicated that the internal pressure was at approximately ambient pressure. The pressure valve remained closed and pressure gauge did not indicate a rise above ambient though the morning of August 17th. The tanker trailer was relocated to the far end of the TA Travel Center truck parking area awaiting final disposal, and the truck stop re-opened. EPA, in consultation with NJDEP, ceased air-monitoring and demobilized from the site.						
2.	**Dates:**	2/14-16/22	**Event:**	QualCo Incorporated Warehouse Fire; Passaic, NJ	**ACT**		**NOT**	X
	Issue / Concern:	Fire involving chlorine pellets and other pool chemicals						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, USCG, NJDEP, Passaic Fire Department						
	Decisions Made:	A massive fire started at approximately 2030 hours on Friday, January 14, 2022, at the QualCo Incorporated warehouse on Canal Street in Passaic, NJ. Qualco packages, stores, and distributes solid granular pool and spa chemicals. Local officials issued a shelter-in- place order and advised residents to keep their windows and doors closed. NJDEP requested EPA Region 2 support with air monitoring. EPA immediately mobilized an OSC, EPA ERT, and START and SERAS contractor personnel. The incident was in USCG's coastal zone jurisdiction. USCG was also on site to offer assistance to state and local government. A small fish kill was						

		observed in the Passaic River and USCG responded to investigate. USCG agreed to have NJDEP assume the lead role for air monitoring response, with EPA in a supporting role to NJDEP. Early on the morning of 1/15, a portion of the QualCo building collapsed; however, that part of the structure was used for retail shipping and reportedly contained mostly plastics and pallets. The remaining sections of the building potentially contained up to 100,000 lbs of chlorine pellets; however, the exact quantity and specific chemicals involved in the fire were unknown. It was reported that most of the chemicals were stored in an adjacent structure that was effectively protected by fire suppression efforts. If consumed in the fire, the chemicals would produce chlorine gas, which is extremely toxic and a respiratory hazard. In consultation with NJDEP, EPA deployed five Honeywell/RAE Systems AreaRaes PRO units, which provided real-time data through EPA ERTs VIPER Deployment Manager, allowing NJDEP and EPA to remotely access real-time air monitoring data. Throughout the incident, readings at and above the Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs) were recorded at two locations; therefore, the shelter in place order remained in effect for the duration of the incident. Late on 1/15, a heavy equipment contractor arrived and began to demolish the remaining structure and gain access to the smoldering basement fire. Firefighting operations were completed, and the fire department demobilized from the scene by 0830 on 1/16. EPA and its contractors continued to provide real-time air monitoring support throughout the night at the request of the NJDEP. No readings of concern above background were observed. NJDEP declared an official end to the operations at approximately 1000 hours on 1/16, and all assets were demobilized.
3.	**Dates:** 3/16-29/22	**Event:** 39-49 Tucker Street Ammonia Release; Trenton, NJ **ACT** **NOT** X
	Issue / Concern:	Leaking ammonia from a food service distribution company's refrigeration system.
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, NJDEP, Trenton FD, Trenton PD, Trenton OEM, Mercer County OEM, NJOEM, NJDOL
	Decisions Made:	On March 16, 2022, the Trenton Fire Department (TFD) received an anonymous call about an odor from a vacant building located at 39-49 Tucker Street. The facility was previously occupied by a food service distribution company, and was located in an urban, mixed commercial-residential setting; a school and a public library are located within 1/2 mile of the site. TFD arrived on scene to find demolition workers inside the building, who indicated that they were using a reciprocating saw on 3/15 when they accidentally cut a pipeline associated with the old ammonia refrigeration system. The contractors evacuated the building when the line began venting. When they returned the following morning, they detected a strong ammonia smell and did not re-enter the building. TFD conducted a Level A entry to identify the source of the leak and observed an old refrigeration system consisting of two heavily corroded ammonia cylinders, and a third large cylinder whose function (storage vs expansion tank) was not determined. TFD air monitoring with a Photo-Ionization Detector (PID) indicated 900 ppm VOCs in the basement; however, the TFD did not have an ammonia sensor available at the time of entry. The TFD entry team observed one cylinder that was approximately 3/4 full based on frosting on the tank. TFD also observed frosting on the wall behind the cylinder and could hear a hissing sound, all indicating an active leak. However, TFD could not definitively determine the location of the leak due to poor visibility and the configuration of the components of the system. At the time of entry, it was assumed that the leaking cylinder(s) were 1/2-ton capacity; however, actual capacity could not be confirmed. TFD assumed control of the scene and evacuated a 300' area surrounding the building, including an 11-story apartment building, a residential home health center and approximately 20 row homes, a local business, and one single family residence. Approximately 160 people were evacuated; 33

people sheltered at a local school; the remaining residents stayed with friends or relatives. TFD notified NJDEP for assistance, and NJDEP requested EPA Region 2 air monitoring support. EPA arrived on scene that afternoon and met with NJDEP and county and local officials. Unified Command was established with participation from EPA, NJDEP, NJOEM, Mercer County OEM, Trenton OEM, NJ Department of Labor, TFD and TPD. At the request of NJDEP, EPA activated the Interagency Modeling and Atmospheric Assessment Center (IMAAC) to provide plume modelling to help inform evacuation decisions.

On 3/17, EPA deployed five air monitoring locations on ERT's VIPER Deployment Manager to provide real-time data during the response. The highest ammonia concentrations were observed in front of the facility. A Level A entry team consisting of two ERRS contractor personnel and two TFD members entered the building to continue the leak investigation, document current conditions and obtain photographs of the ammonia system. The entry team could hear a leak emanating from one cylinder, which appeared to be coming from underneath and at the end of the cylinder, but the team was unable to see the alleged cut in the pipeline or determine the exact location of the leak. The entry team observed that the cylinders were rusted and in deteriorating condition; one cylinder was frosted with ice, confirming an on-going leak and suggesting the cylinder was at half capacity. There were also thirty-two 55-gallon drums of refrigerant oil in the basement of the building. Two ERRS contractors made a second Level A entry to assess the cylinders and to determine if source mitigation was possible. The ERRS contractors were unable to stop the release or gain visual access to determine its exact location. It was determined that a specialty response team would be subcontracted through the ERRS contractor to evacuate the remaining ammonia in the cylinders.

On 3/18, a sixth air monitoring station was deployed at a nearby Elementary School. Monitoring equipment at each location consisted of one AreaRAE Pro and one Honeywell SPM Flex to provide continuous monitoring for ammonia gas. Except for Location 2, the majority of the ambient air monitoring results were below 1 ppm for ammonia. Location 2 was situated close to an opening in the building. The majority of readings from this location were below the Acute Exposure Guide Levels 1 (AEGL 1) of 30 ppm. Temporary readings at Location 2 were observed above AEGL 1 in the overnight hours; however, this location was part of the exclusion zone and there were no significant offsite impacts. The temporary elevated readings at this location were likely due to a combination of calm overnight weather conditions and changes in the rate of release from the leaking cylinder. A specialty high-hazard team from IES arrived onsite on 3/18 to evaluate the situation and develop a mitigation plan.

On 3/19, the high-hazard team made entry into the building to evaluate the system, determine the location of the leak and develop a mitigation plan. IES observed a cut in an iron pipe located on the side of one of the cylinders near the sight glass. Small puffs of vapor could be seen coming from the cut. Frosting was not present on the piping or the tanks at the time of entry, indicating that no liquid remained in the system. IES then made entry into the basement to attach a vac system to the tank and remove any remaining liquids. High readings of ammonia were still present in the basement. Once the liquids were removed, nitrogen was used to flush the system to remove any remaining vapors. No elevated readings were detected on any of the six perimeter air monitoring stations. During the afternoon UC meeting, TPD announced that they had met their objectives for the incident and demobed from the site. Trenton OEM decided to allow the evacuated residents in the high rise building to return to their homes at noon on 3/20; however, the low-rise buildings would remain evacuated.

On 3/20, EPA contractors completed the decommissioning of the refrigeration system. This included a rinse of the cylinders and associated piping with water; removal of fittings from the cylinders and piping; and drilling holes in the cylinders. Air monitoring readings in the basement indicated the concentration of ammonia vapors were dissipating but still remained above levels of concern. EPA continued air monitoring operations in the surrounding community and indicated no readings above any action levels. However, EPA continued air monitoring while conducting mitigation activities within the building. Based on air monitoring readings from the past two days and nights, Trenton OEM lifted the evacuation order of all residents and businesses in the area effective at 1300 on 3/20. An EPA CIC was on-site to assist residents returning to their homes.

		On 3/21, EPA contractors conducted pressure washing activities in the basement. All accessible surfaces were washed with high-pressure, hot water to disassociate any ammonia from the porous surfaces in the room. Approximately 200 gallons of ammoniated water were produced and recovered. A test of the mixture indicated a pH of 10. EPA contacted the Trenton Sewer Utility who approved discharging the material into a nearby sewer line. Air monitoring readings in the building indicated the concentration of ammonia vapors dissipated after the pressure washing activities, but remained elevated within the room containing the cylinders. Air monitoring readings at the community stations and the station located outside of the building continued to show no elevated readings. A meeting was held with reps from EPA, NJDEP, TFD, Trenton OEM and Mercer County OEM. All parties agreed further mitigation activities were not required as the ammonia vapors were not impacting off-site entities. NJDEP and EPA agreed to return in a week and conduct an entry into the building to conduct air monitoring to determine if vapors continued to dissipate. All parties agreed the air monitoring efforts in the community were no longer required. EPA removed the air monitoring equipment in the area and all personnel and equipment demobilized from the site. On 3/29, EPA met on-site with representatives from NJDEP and the PRP to reassess the ammonia vapors within the building. EPA and NJDEP entered the building and conducted air monitoring throughout. The highest reading was 7 ppm of ammonia observed in the basement in the room housing the ammonia cylinders. Based on the significant decrease in vapor concentrations within the building, EPA and NJDEP determined EPA assistance was no longer required at the site.

C. RRT Exercises - None during CY-2022				
1.	**Dates:**		**Event:**	
	Agencies Involved:			
	Summary of exercise:			

D. Changes in RRT Leadership		
Agency	**Outgoing Personnel**	**Incoming personnel**
1) USCG RRT Coordinator	CDR Jesse Diaz	LCDR Kristi Butler
2)		

E. Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the RRT (which may help other RRTs)

F. Federal, State, and Local Planning and Coordination Efforts

- **Marine Debris**: On-going marine debris planning for New York State continues with federal and state partners, led by NOAA's Marine Debris Program. The New Jersey Marine Debris Emergency Response Guide, first published in 2021, was updated in 2022.

- **Offshore Energy**: Federal and State agencies continue to pursue information, coordination and partnerships as a result of multiple Offshore Renewable Energy Initiatives in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

- **Upper Delaware River Contingency Planning**: EPA Regions 2 and 3 continue a series of planning and preparedness activities in coordination with NPS, state and county agencies which began in 2021, including a tactical tabletop exercise; the development of pre-planned tactical response plans/strategies (GRPs) in selected areas/segments of the Upper Delaware; and a full-scale deployment exercise designed to further coordinate multi-

jurisdictional response in the area and to validate the response strategies. A full-scale exercise is currently targeted for Spring/Summer 2023. The resulting activity will be used to update/revise the applicable area contingency plans and the NPS Upper Delaware River Spill Response Plan.

- **Lake Champlain Contingency Planning:** EPA completed shoreline surveys for response strategy development along the northern portion of Lake Champlain in October 2021. The data is currently being used for development of Geographic Response Plans for the northern portion of the lake. The data will be aggregated with south lake strategies for the production of hard copy and Viewer-accessible GRPs for the entire lake.

- **Executive Order 13650 Continued Coordination:** EPA, DHS and OSHA continue to share facility-specific information in accordance with each agency's requirements, policies, and procedures. EPA shares such information on an as-needed basis with federal, state, and local partners. EPA continues to compare DHS, NJDEP and EPA inventory data to identify non-filers for potential inspection candidates and referrals to other agencies.

G. Challenges and Issues (and Operational Requirements Which May Require NRT Attention)

- Virtual RRT meetings, although safest during the pandemic and in alignment with various Agency and organizational restrictions, are not as effective in establishing and maintaining the personal relationships developed at in-person RRT meetings. Identifying facilities and resources to successfully host and accommodate hybrid meetings poses a challenge.