

About This Study

The National Response Team (NRT) is issuing this study to encourage coordination of local level emergency planning (e.g., Local Emergency Planning Committee plans under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act and local fire service plans) and Area Contingency Plans under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). This study describes examples of effective coordination in local emergency planning and identifies what made the coordination effective.

Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, State Emergency Response Commissions (SERCs) were tasked to create Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). LEPCs are responsible for planning to protect public health and safety in the event of a hazardous material emergency. Committees are typically led by local fire and emergency personnel, and place emphasis on protecting public health and safety.

OPA 90 establishes Area Committees. Area Committees are comprised of qualified members of federal, state, and local government agencies. Each Area Committee, under the direction of the federal On-Scene Coordinator for its area, works with state and local officials to expedite decision-making during response activities. These committees also work with state and local officials to enhance the contingency planning of those officials, and to assure planning for joint response efforts. To accomplish this, Area Committees develop Area Contingency Plans (ACPs). In developing an ACP, the OSC coordinates with affected SERCs and LEPCs [30 CFR 300.210(c)]. Each ACP contains geographical, resource, policy, and coordinated planning information necessary to focus on preparedness and response activities in its specific area.

While geographic boundaries of LEPCs and Area Committees may differ, their planning and response mandates are overlapping and complementary. Therefore, coordination of their separate activities is highly beneficial and strongly encouraged. The goal of coordinated planning is preparedness for effective response by federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private sector responders. For the most effective and efficient response, this coordination should occur regardless of the event causing the release, or the applicable laws and regulations.

The case studies in this report were provided by local groups to highlight their successful coordinated planning efforts. Individual authors and reviewers have ensured that the perspectives of these groups have been captured. Readers are invited to provide comments and direct their questions to the authors. A summary and points of contact are provided so that interested readers may obtain more information.

Each case study is intended to highlight how coordination was accomplished and how it improved response effectiveness. By summarizing examples of coordinated planning

activities, the NRT hopes to encourage replication of these successful practices around the country.

This report is one of several NRT initiatives to encourage coordinated local level emergency planning. Also in preparation are:

- A fact sheet on planning requirements under various federal laws dealing with hazardous materials releases and oil discharges, and
- Guidance on methods to encourage integrated oil and hazardous materials response planning at the local level.

The NRT appreciates the participation of the groups described in this report. We are also interested in additional examples of effective coordination of local level emergency planning. These may be sent to:

National Response Team
c/o U.S. EPA
MC 5104
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20460

Fax: (202) 260-0154

www.nrt.org