

REGION II REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM 2006 ANNUAL REPORT

Period of Report: January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006

Ms. Karen Burgan
National Response Team
USEPA Headquarters
OEM/ MC 5104A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. Burgan:

As required by Section 300.115 of the National Contingency Plan, the Region II Regional Response Team Report is submitted for the period of January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006.

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. MAJOR/NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

CAPSIZED F/V HAIL MARY II: On January 3, 2006, Marine Safety Detachment Coram personnel responded to a report of a capsized fishing vessel, the 'Hail Mary II', capsized in Shinnecock Bay, NY. The Fishing Vessel is a 63ft steel hulled vessel, and had approximately 4,000 gals of diesel on board. The Fishing Vessel capsized approx 30ft from the entrance to Soleau marina. A unified Command was formed to oversee salvage operations to raise the capsized fishing vessel *Hail Mary II* from Shinnecock Inlet, Long Island, N.Y. on January 7 2006 at Soleau Marina off Dune Road in Shinnecock. The vessel capsized in heavy seas January 3 while returning to port with 30,000 pounds of fish and 4,000 gallons of diesel fuel. The fuel remained contained and very little sheening was reported. The vessel remained 95-percent submerged about 50 feet from Shinnecock Inlet's western jetty. The salvage plan called for the 72-foot steel dragger *Hail Mary II* to be towed inshore then prepared to be hoisted by a barge-loaded crane. It was then taken to a commercial dock for dewatering. A Unified Command consisting of Coast Guard, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Town of Southampton, Environmental Conservation Police, Sea Spill, and Sea Tow officials, was established to monitor the salvage operations and prepare to recover any potential pollution.

ARTHUR KILL OIL SPILL, PERTH AMBOY, NJ: On February 13, 2006, the Coast Guard responded to an oil spill at the Chevron Perth Amboy facility, in Perth Amboy, NJ. The spill occurred during a transfer of approximately 1.5 million gallons of number six heavy fuel oil from a barge to the facility. A New York Police Department over-flight confirmed the spill stretching from the Chevron facility to Smoking Point, Staten Island, in the Arthur Kill. Chevron Perth Amboy assumed responsibility for the spill and contracted Clean Harbors and Atlantic Response for the cleanup. The Coast Guard established a safety zone from the Outerbridge Crossing to Fresh Kills, Staten Island, to

facilitate containment efforts. A Unified Incident Command (UIC), comprised of Chevron Products Co., the U.S. Coast Guard (with coordination from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), as well as state and city environmental agencies, was established for the crude oil spill in the Arthur Kill. The source of spill was determined to be in the EPA zone. FOSC responsibilities were transferred by USCG and assumed by EPA. Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research Inc. was used to reduce the impact of the spill on wildlife and help affected waterfowl. Total wildlife impacts was reduced to: 13 birds captured and treated, 4 birds dead, 1 marine mammal dead, 1 fish dead. The total volume of the crude oil spilled was estimated to be approximately 31,000 gallons. Pollution investigators determined that the facility's piping system was not in compliance with federal hydrostatic testing requirements. The transfer line that was source of spill was determined to be approximately 2 months overdue for required annual hydro-test. Last documented test occurred December 08, 2004.

NYC ANTHRAX RESPONSE: On February 22, 2006, EPA was informed by the NYC Department of Health of an anthrax investigation in New York City, and was requested to attend a briefing with FBI, NYCDOH, NYPD and other Agencies. At the briefing, EPA learned that anthrax had been found in several locations, including an apartment in Lower Manhattan. Investigators believed the anthrax was naturally occurring, and originated from animal hides used to make traditional African drums. The resident of the apartment had contracted inhalational anthrax, and his work with the hides during drum making was believed to be the source of the exposure. The contaminant was carried on his clothing from his workshop located in Brooklyn to his apartment.

Based on sampling performed by the FBI and NYPD, and analysis by the NYCDOH lab, EPA was requested to assist in the decontamination of the apartment. Several meetings were held with the NYCDOH, ERRS, ERT and NDT to determine the most effective method to decon the apartment and common spaces of the building. A meeting was also held with the other tenants to explain the situation, provide information about anthrax, explain the decontamination procedure and answer any questions they may have. Meetings were also held with representatives of the resident, who requested that EPA make all possible attempts to save specifically identified family heirlooms and items of significant sentimental value. It was agreed that porous items such as clothing, bedding, curtains and food would be disposed of.

Initial decon activities were performed on March 2nd. Personnel decontamination support was provided by the USCG Atlantic Strike Team. On March 6th, analytical results received from the NYCDOH lab indicated that additional decontamination should be performed in the apartment. On March 8th, the contaminated areas of the apartment were decontaminated using adjusted procedures. Analytical results received on March 10 indicated that all results were negative and work at the 31 Downing Street location was complete.

On March 18th, materials removed from the Downing Street location were autoclaved at the NYES facility in Oneonta, New York. Material had remained on the transporters'

vehicle due to multiple acceptance refusals at facilities both in and outside New York State. Assistance from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) facilitated the acceptance and treatment of the waste at the NYES facility. On April 13th, the autoclaved material from Downing Street was transported to, accepted and treated at the Stericycle facility in Warren, Ohio. The material was incinerated; completing disposal of the material from the decon of 31 Downing Street.

BINGHAMTON FLOODS: Excessive rain along the eastern seaboard during the week of June 29, 2006 caused severe flooding of the Hudson, Susquehanna and Delaware River watersheds. The flood waters which damaged both residential and commercial properties in New York State prompted the Presidential Disaster Declaration, 1650DR-NY. EPA received a Mission Assignment on July 6, 2006 which included household hazardous waste collection, staging, characterization, and disposal and orphan container recovery and disposal. EPA On-Scene Coordinators responded to the impacted area and joined with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation personnel to establish an Incident Command structure to facilitate the planning of operational tactics, coordinate contractor resource requests, standardize operational protocols and develop a consistent public information strategy.

EPA established 21 Household Hazardous Waste collection and staging areas throughout the flood-ravaged counties where homeowners could bring and dispose of any household chemicals in containers contaminated by flood waters. In addition, orphan container collection operations were conducted on land and water in all the affected areas. Response vehicles, ATVs, boats and helicopters were used to locate and then to collect the hazardous materials dispersed by the flood. From these combined operations, a total of 51,881 containers have been collected, segregated, and disposed. The containers collected ranged from 1 gallon bottles to 55- gallon drums to empty home heating oil tanks, and included propane cylinders, fluorescent lights, batteries and other miscellaneous items.

USCG Atlantic Strike Team (AST) deployed personnel as directed by FOSC to support HAZMAT and oil spill response and assessment to areas in New York State affected by flooding as described in presidential declaration 1650. AST received a request from EPA Region II for assistance with pumping operations for contaminated flood waters in Binghamton, NY. AST personnel provided assistance with pump operations and technical support.

NEWTOWN CREEK, BROOKLYN, NY: The northeast area of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, between North Henry Street, Norman Avenue, and Newtown Creek, has been heavily industrialized and the site of various petroleum industries for nearly 140 years. Petroleum refining within the Greenpoint area began in approximately 1866, and by 1870, over 50 refineries were located along the banks of Newtown Creek.

On September 2, 1978, a USCG helicopter patrol noticed signs of an oil spill entering Newtown Creek. A subsequent investigation concluded that the area of the spill under the

Greenpoint area was in excess of 52 acres and the total spill volume, as estimated in 1979, was approximately 17 million gallons of petroleum products. The spill area consists of large amounts of free product on the water table. In addition to free product under the site, residual petroleum contamination exists in groundwater, and native soil and fill material. In the past, vapor from contamination in the area also impacted sewer lines. Soil contamination has been encountered in excavations in the area. Groundwater drawn from below the free product has shown dissolved petroleum constituents. Free product has impacted both a shallow aquifer and a deeper regional aquifer.

Petroleum product recovery operations are currently being conducted within four distinct areas, including the Exxon/Mobil Brooklyn Terminal, the BP Brooklyn Terminal, the commercial/industrial/residential area southwest of the BP Terminal known as the Off-Site Area, and the site of the former Paragon Oil Terminal, which is currently the location of the Peerless Importers facility.

U.S. Coast Guard Sector New York had been the predesignated OSC for this incident since 1978. On July 21, 2006, Captain Robert R. O'Brien transferred OSC authority to remove or arrange for the removal of a discharge and mitigate or prevent the substantial threat of a discharge of oil to Newtown Creek, from USCG to EPA Region 2. This transfer followed procedures and guidance developed as part of the recent revisions to the EPA/USCG jurisdictional boundary agreement.

Newtown Creek Legislation: The US Coast Guard appropriations bill, signed by the President on July 11, 2006, contained a requirement for EPA to conduct a one year study of the Newtown Creek oil spill. The amendment, authored by Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-Brooklyn & Queens) and Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-Manhattan, Brooklyn & Queens), requires EPA to do the following:

- conduct a study of public health and safety concerns related to the pollution caused by seepage of oil into Newtown Creek.
- not later than one year after the date of enactment of the Act, submit a report containing the results of the study to the Committee on Environment and Public Works and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

The USCG National Pollution Funds Center has issued a Federal Project Number to EPA, which will fund the study of the issues of Seeps, Free Product Plume, and the Dissolved Oil Plume. Since NPFC would not provide funding for the study of NRDA and Vapor Intrusion issues, EPA established a CERCLA account number for those portions of the study.

KRISTIN POLING GROUNDING: The Kristin Poling ran aground in East Rockaway Inlet about 450 yards from shore around 12:00 a.m. on November 10, 2006. Poling and Cutler Marine, the owners of the tanker, notified Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound in New Haven, CT, that the tanker ran aground on sandy bottom and was carrying

672,000 gallons of #2 home heating oil. The ship suffered no apparent hull breach and no oil product entered the water. A Unified Command consisting of New York DEC, Nassau County PD and FD, Hempstead Bay Constable, Coast Guard and Poling and Cutler, was established to monitor the situation, develop plans to re-float the vessel and to develop contingency plans in the case of a cargo release. Plans called for lightering the tank ship and using tugs to pull it off the sandy bottom at high tide. Although the single-hulled tank ship suffered no hull breach and the ship was on a sandy bottom, Captain of the Port for Long Island Sound directed Poling and Cutler to ensure adequate pollution containment and recovery equipment could be deployed should a worst-case discharge occur. The Coast Guard was positioned to utilize pollution response equipment to mitigate any potential short-term and long-term environmental impacts an oil discharge could cause to sensitive areas. The cause of the grounding is still under investigation.

B. RRT MEETINGS

RRT II convened in the fall on October 3 – 4, 2006 at the Four Points by Sheraton in Plainview, New York.

C. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES

BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT WORKGROUP: The revisions to the EPA/USCG jurisdictional boundary agreement were signed in July 2006. Changes made to the boundary include a major restructuring of the boundary in the five boroughs of New York City. The agreement also includes a template for transferring FOSC authority between agencies when the majority of an area impacted by oil or hazardous material would better suit the expertise of the other agency.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A. TRAINING

The Long Island Sound Area Planning Committee had scheduled a half-day "Business of Oil" Seminar for Monday October 2nd, to be held in conjunction with the RRT II meeting. However, due to conflict with the Yom Kippur holiday, the seminar was postponed until Spring 2007.

Incident Command System training goals are underway to expand service-wide ICS competencies to enhance domestic incident management, prevention, preparedness, and response and recovery capabilities. A substantial amount of First District personnel have completed ICS-100/200 and IS 700/800 courses. Current plans are to aggressively pursue ICS 300/400 competencies for all CG officers, all personnel involved in response operations, and personnel on special response teams. In FY06 we have achieved approximately 30 percent of our intermediate and advance ICS training goals.

Coast Guard First District has been pre-identified members to staff a Joint Field Office

team. These members have received intermediate and advanced ICS training. The team members have also completed JFO orientation.

B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS

IMTT- BAYONNE EMERGENCY ACTION DRILL, 18 OCT 2006: International Matex Tank Terminals (IMTT) exercised the Bayonne Facility Emergency Action Plan. Participants in the exercise included: IMTT ERT, Bayonne Police and Fire Dept's, McCabe Ambulance, Jersey City Fire Dept, Bayonne Hospital, Kinder Morgan Oil Terminal, USCG, NJ State Police Marine Bureau and additional local industry representatives. An Emergency Response Team was assembled and the terminal was secured and set up for evacuation. An Incident Command Post and Medical Staging were established and MSDS were distributed to responders. Security Passwords were issued to Responders to gain access to the facility. Security Search Teams were set up to go in and evaluate safe areas to respond to and view overall incident situation.

C. FEDERAL, STATE, and LOCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION EFFORTS

REGIONAL CONTINGENCY PLAN UPDATE: July 2006, the Regional Contingency plan was amended to revise the existing demarcation of the inland and costal zones between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) in Federal Region II for pre-designation of On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) for pollution response, pursuant to the NCP.

D. MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESPONSES, TRAININGS, EXERCISES, WORKSHOPS AND OTHER RRT ACTIVITIES

NYC Anthrax Response: Decontamination was completed in an expedited manner, with as little impact to the residents as possible. However, disposal of the anthrax-contaminated material was extremely difficult. Multiple facilities capable of treating biological waste refused to accept the material due to the contaminant being anthrax. Material needed to be autoclaved, and confirmation of successful treatment made prior to medical/biological waste incinerators considering acceptance of the material.

III. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

NEW FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT COMMANDER: Rear Admiral Timothy Sullivan assumed the duty of Commander, First Coast Guard District and Commander, Maritime Defense Command One in July 2006. He oversees all Coast Guard missions across eight states in the Northeast and 2000 miles of coastline from the US-Canada border to northern New Jersey.

RRT COORDINATOR: LTJG Nigel P. John assumed the duties of RRT coordinator in August 2006. His predecessor LTJG Barry Breslin departed from active duty and is now working at FEMA Region III.

NEW PREPARDNESS STAFF: The recent implementation of sectors and the consolidation of Coast Guard mission areas introduced an organizational structure focused on three key processes - prevention, response, and planning. With sectors up and running the alignment of district staffs to the sector structure followed. Coast Guard has now aligned the district organization with the sector model. With spring hurricane planning efforts USCG District One conducted a second-stage reorganization consolidating all hazards preparedness employees in a section under the Incident Management Branch. The preparedness section is responsible for preparing First District personnel to respond to all contingencies.

IV. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION

None

V. FUTURE PLANS

FUTURE RRT II MEETINGS: The next RRT II meeting is scheduled for January 23-25, 2007. This will be a joint meeting with RRT III, and will be held at the EPA Region 2 Facility and the Sheraton Edison Hotel Raritan Center, both located in Edison, NJ.

The Spring RRT II meeting is scheduled for June 5-6, 2007. The proposed location is West Point, NY. The Fall/Winter 2007-08 meeting is scheduled for December 5-6, 2007 at a location to be determined.

VI. CONCURRENCE

_____/_____
Mr. Eric Mosher (Date)
EPA Co-Chair
U.S. EPA, Region II

_____/_____
Captain Mark H. Landry (Date)
U.S. Coast Guard Co-Chair
First Coast Guard District