

Mr. John Gustafson
Executive Director
National Response Team
c/o EPA Emergency Operations Center (5101)
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Gustafson,

As you know, Section 300.115 of the National Contingency Plan requests that RRTs provide letter reports to the NRT, summarizing recent activities, organizational changes, operational concerns, and efforts to improve state and local coordination. This Region II Regional Response Team annual report is submitted for the period of January 1 to December 31, 1998.

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. MAJOR/NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

In the early morning of April 9, EPA responded to an explosion incident, which occurred the night before, at the Morton International Specialty Chemical Manufacturing facility located in Paterson, NJ. This facility manufactures speciality chemicals and was manufacturing "Yellow 96" a solvent used as an additive in gasoline when the explosion occurred. The chemical compounds tentatively involved in the incident were a Ethyl-Hexal Amine and Ortho-Nitril-Chloro Benzene. Nine workers were injured and two originally listed in critical condition. EPA provided technical assistance, such as air monitoring, to NJDEP who oversaw RP cleanup activities, and investigated facility compliance with EPCRA reporting requirements. The Chemical Safety Board conducted an investigation of the accident. US Senators Lautenberg and Torricelli visited the site of the explosion.

On May 22, 1998, EPA responded to the scene of a JP-5 jet fuel spill in Burlington Township, NJ. At approximately 8:30 p.m. on May 21, a power line separated between poles and dropped onto the ground above the pipeline. The power arced through approximately 3 feet of soil to the 8 inch pipeline. This caused both a fire at the soil surface and a hole in the pipeline. Local firefighters extinguished the fire; however, the leak in the pipeline was not discovered until approximately 11:30 p.m. by power company crews repairing the downed line. The bulk of the material from the pipeline discharged to the soil and a low area at the base of an embankment. Some material discharged to a small un-named stream which runs to Assiscunk Creek and eventually to the Delaware River. All material in the stream was collected prior to Assiscunk Creek. Material discharged to the soil and the embankment was excavated and staged at the Interstate facility in Bordentown, NJ. Material discharged to the stream was collected by vacuum truck and staged in a holding tank at the Interstate facility. A collar was placed around the pipeline to stop the leak. Pressure testing and final welding of the collar took place on May 27th. The pipeline transfers JP-5 from the Interstate facility on the Delaware River to the facility in Bordentown and then to McGuire Air Force Base. Officials at the scene included EPA; NJDEP; McGuire AFB Fire Department; Burlington County Office of Emergency Management; the Burlington County Police, Fire and Health Departments; USCG-MSO Philadelphia; and Interstate Storage and Pipeline.

On May 22, 1998, a fire occurred at Mueller's Machinery in Edison, NJ, located adjacent to the CIC Superfund Site. The cause of the fire was unknown. EPA and NJDEP examined the CIC Site, and observed that the fire had burned to within 10 ft of CIC's landfill cover, with only minor burns at the edge closest to the fire. The Edison Fire Chief requested advice on the material burning on the grounds of Mueller Machinery. EPA, NJDEP and Middlesex Hazmat examined the material and determined that pieces of plastic were burning. Foam was brought in to extinguish the burning plastic. EPA left the site after it was confirmed that the remaining burn areas were under control and that there was no longer a threat to the CIC landfill cover.

On May 28, 1998, the *M/V NEDLLOYD DEJIMA* ran hard aground in the Kill Van Kull at the entrance of the New Jersey Pierhead Channel to Con Hook Reach, with 27,000 bbls. of #6 diesel oil and lube oil on board. It took on an 11 degree port list. The vessel was safely refloated with assistance from tug boats and proceeded to Berth 55 Port Elizabeth for a hull survey. No pollution was observed. The incident was covered by *Professional Mariner* magazine.

On June 15, 1998, while following up on a chemical release at Heterene Inc., located in Paterson, NJ, EPA discovered several areas within the facility where chemicals were stored in containers with advanced stages of deterioration. EPA videotaped the conditions at the facility, and presented the video to a meeting of EPA enforcement supervisors and to follow up meetings of EPA and State management and multi-media inspectors. A Multi-Media inspection was conducted and enforcement actions are likely from both State and EPA. Under a consent order, the PRP has conducted sampling and analysis of more than 1,200 samples. Depending on sampling results, future activities will likely be a partial Fund-lead removal action concurrent with a partial PRP-lead removal action.

On July 11, 1998, three railroad cars of Sodium Hydroxide derailed near Tomkins Cove in Rockland County, NY, along the banks of the Hudson River. The cars were listed as empty, but probably held 400 - 500 gallons of liquid. Two tankcars were on the land and one rolled into the Hudson River. One of the cars on land leaked, and the liquid flowed away from the River and formed a 40-50 foot diameter pool. The vegetation in the area died from contact. Local Fire Department, NY State DEC, and USCG Activities-NY responded to the scene. No sodium hydroxide was released into the Hudson River. USCG provided an on-scene vessel to secure a safety zone around the wreck site while the railcars were removed. A fourth chemical car (labeled for chlorine) was found and proved to be empty also.

In Alexandria Bay, NY, sheens were frequently reported over the summer. An investigation revealed that 24 years ago, a Canadian vessel had sunk in 260 feet of water. MSO Buffalo opened the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) and hired DonJon Marine to inspect the vessel. Eight drums of oil products were discovered, and the responsible party hired its own salvage contractor to remove the drums.

On September 5, the *T/B Ocean States* grounded in the East River in New York City. An undetermined amount of gasoline and #2 Diesel were discharged, out of a potential of 7 million gallons total. A Unified command of USCG Activities NY, NY DEC, and Maritrans, Inc. managed the response, which quickly dealt with the spill, including lightering the barge that had holed several of its tanks. Due to the products spilled and the environmental conditions, environmental impact was minimal. CNN, Today, Oil Spill Intelligence Report, and the New York Post covered the incident. A USCG D1 press release containing additional information can be found at <http://www.d1dpa.com/d1s52-98.html>

A transformer fire occurred at a Con Edison facility in September 1998, involving 2200 gallons of dielectric fluid. Initial reports indicated that there were no PCBs in the transformer fluid; however, PCB concentrations were later found to be at 100,000 ppm. Activities New York is following up.

Also in September 1998, the tug *Bruce McAllister*, carrying gasoline, caught fire in the Hudson River, near Kingston, NY. A passing tug assisted, as did USCGC WIRE. The tank barge was safely anchored, and the response was focused on extinguishing tug fire. No product was spilled.

An air release from a nearby facility threatened MSO Philadelphia. There was no plan in place to protect the USCG building and to provide procedures for shutting down the ventilation systems, bring staff into the building from the vessels and docks, etc. Such a plan will be developed for the facility.

B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS

Dispersant Workshop: On Tuesday, March 24, 1998, a Dispersant Workshop, prepared by the United States Coast Guard Atlantic Strike Team, was held for governmental and industry officials within Region I and Region II. The Workshop presented an overview of dispersant effectiveness and toxicity and the concurrence process for approval of their use in the coastal zone. Approximately 75 people attended.

Response 98: On April 20-24, 1998, several RRT member agencies participated in *Response '98*, a major hurricane exercise conducted by FEMA, covering Regions 1 and 2 and four Canadian provinces. In Region 2, federal and state agencies participated at the FEMA Regional Operations Center (ROC) at 26 Federal Plaza, as well as on two Emergency Response Team - Advanced Elements (ERT-A) which were mobilized to state emergency operation centers in Albany, NY and West Trenton, NJ. As the lead federal agency for Emergency Support Function (ESF) #10 - Hazardous Materials, EPA addressed numerous scenarios involving oil, hazardous substances and natural gas incidents in both

states, and coordinated simulated responses with state, county and local officials. EPA also discussed potential involvement with, and assistance to, USACE and PHS under ESF's #3 & 8 (Public Works & Engineering, Health & Medical Services), in the areas of debris management, water/wastewater treatment plants, drinking water quality, etc. A 'hotwash' was conducted on April 24, and EPA provided several comments on the need for better communication between ESF #1 (Transportation) and ESF #10 regarding transportation-related oil & hazmat incidents. In addition, EPA provided several recommendations on modifications to the ROC, which could further enhance the level of information management, as well as communication and coordination between ESFs.

Niagara '98: On August 25, 1998, EPA and MSO Buffalo participated in *Niagara '98*, a US/Canadian Joint Response Exercise. More than 600 emergency responders from the United States and Canada gathered in Buffalo, NY to test the Cross Border Contingency Plan and the response capabilities of those agencies that would be involved should a terrorist event occur along the U.S./Canada border. Personnel representing all levels of response from local to federal participated in the event. Scenarios included the release of oil and hazardous materials on water and on land in both the United States and Canada, fire, and explosion, as well as a terrorism component.

Industry-led PREP at Coast Guard Activities New York, 22-23 Jan 98: The well-run drill tested the industry leadership role, ICS format, the NOAA spill web, and the suitability of the layout of Activities New York. The success of the exercise came from involving the stakeholders in the design team early and focusing on objectives. The drill tested the physical layout of the Coast Guard base at Ft. Wadsworth, Staten Island, which was designed to act as an ICS command post. Prior to the event, training was done by the USCG Public Information Assist Team and NOAA, and ICS 300 training was done by Atlantic Strike Team. The phone system worked well. Areas for improvement were found in Joint Information Center (JIC) communications. Over 150 people participated, plus many observers from the Area Committee. The drill also tested booming strategies at Liberty Island State Park. The PREP also tested the NOAA Spill Web system. It is designed for incidents lasting a week or more. With digital cameras fed into a laptop and using a cellular modem, images are communicated in almost real time. The system can be used to feed info to the JIC. The system is operational, not experimental. It is secure within the command post as well. Evidence of the system's viability is that the RP's spill management team bought hardware off-the-shelf on the day of the exercise and made it work.

Long Island Sound PREP: The Long Island Sound September 1998 government-led PREP exercise was a "two day split" exercise that included real time mobilization of the Long Island Sound Area Committee's Incident Command System and Unified Command, culminating in the development of an Incident Action Plan. The exercise involved over 200 people from several federal, state, local, and industry organizations, including two Regional Response Teams, two States and two Responsible Parties. It also included an extensive test of the Coast Guard's spill response information management system (OSC2). Another high point was the success of the USCG Integrated Support Command and Maintenance and Logistics units to successfully assimilate into the ICS/UC. Most importantly, the essence and importance of the PREP process was reinforced as a comprehensive improvement mechanism. The exercise development process provided the area committee and the area response community an excellent self-examination and set the stage for continued improvement in support of "best response". For instance, it provided impetus for the culmination of an inshore approval process for use of dispersants.

In conjunction with this exercise, on September 23 an equipment deployment was conducted in New Haven Harbor, consisting of deploying the Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS) using USCGC KATHERINE WALKER. National Response Corporation's NRC GUARDIAN also deployed their skimmer, which is similar to the VOSS. The "RPs," MORMAC Marine Transport and MORAN Shipping and Towing, went above and beyond, and significantly contributed to the overall success of the exercise process.

MSO Philadelphia: Several exercises have been conducted by tanker owners at MSO Philadelphia recently. Joint Information Centers have been tested, and have worked well.

Unannounced Drills: The Coast Guard routinely conducts unannounced drills according to the PREP guidelines. The purpose of these drills is to improve both industry and Coast Guard response to oil spills. The drills are held quarterly in each CG Captain of the Port zone. On October 23, MSO Long Island Sound conducted an unannounced exercise at the

TOSCO Corp. Riverhead Terminal, Riverhead, NY. The scenario was an average most probable discharge of 50 barrels of # 6 oil spilling from a ruptured transfer manifold. Actual weather conditions were used vice pre-scripting them. This was well-received by all. Notification, Staff Mobilization, and Communication were exercised.

C. RRT MEETINGS

On March 25, 1998, a joint Region I & II Regional Response Team meeting was held at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The meeting was well attended and representatives from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Maine participated. Agenda items included reports on PREP exercises scheduled for MSO Long Island Sound and ACTNY; EPA Regional Reports; distribution of the *Julie N* OSC Report; development of Response Information pamphlets; highlights from the 1998 NRT/RRT Co-Chairs meeting; a presentation by the DOT Office of Pipeline Safety; and a tour of the Atlantic Strike Team facility. A Joint Response Team meeting followed with our Canadian counterparts, to discuss updates to Joint Plans and the upcoming CANUSLANT 99 Exercise.

The semi-annual Region II RRT meeting was held on 12/3 at the USCG Activities-New York facility on Staten Island. Agenda items included OSC reports, presentations by the US Air Force Regional Environmental Coordinator, NOAA's Natural Resource Damage Assessment Center, NJDEP, USGS' Coastal & Marine Geology Program, and the US Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit. EPA discussed the US/Canada Joint Inland Pollution Contingency Plan, lessons learned from the RESPONSE '98 exercise, the status of Federal Response Plan/ESF#10 revisions, and the EPA/OSHA Chemical Accident Investigation Report for Surpass Chemical Co., Inc. EPA also showed the video of the Napp Chemical explosion and accident investigation. The USCG discussed the USCG Y2K Business Continuity Contingency Plan and the planning and time/resource impacts that Y2K has on the FOSCs and the Area Committees. The USCG distributed and reviewed the series of eight tri-fold Spill Prevention, Planning, & Response pamphlets that were developed by RRT1, and the RRT voted to adopt and reprint them as RRT I & II documents. These are available at <http://www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/rrt/rrt2.html>. The RRT meeting summary will be posted in the Semi-Annual Reports folder of the RRT Subconference on NOAA First Class.

D. SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

Executive Steering Committee: Renamed as the Management Committee.

Response Technologies Committee: At the December 1998 semi-annual RRT meeting, the committee was tasked with re-examining the current pre-approval zones for dispersant application and in-situ burning, to determine if zone distances can be moved closer to shore.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS, CONTINGENCY PLANNING & TRAINING

A. PREPAREDNESS

CAMEO System Technical Assistance: EPA's START Team assisted the Middlesex County, NJ HAZMAT Team in importing data for approximately 2900 facilities and 2900 contacts into their CAMEO databases. The data was reformatted from NJ's Right-To-Know, Toxic Catastrophe Prevention Act, and Discharge Prevention, Control and Countermeasures program databases provided by NJDEP.

MSO Buffalo Outreach: A recent xylene incident in the locks near Massena, NY highlighted the fact that local responders are not equipped to handle hazmat responses. MSO Buffalo conducts a large amount of outreach and training to the local response community.

B. PLANNING

Coastal Area Planning: Coast Guard District One published an Area Contingency Planning Strategy that discusses desired outcomes in light of demands, risks/threats, resources, and other issues. Contact CDR Scot Graham for information.

The NY/NJ Port Area Committee will soon make its revised Area Contingency Plan available on its website, <http://www.uscg.mil/d1/units/actny/> on CD, and in hardcopy. Information on all USCG D1 ACPs is posted at <http://www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/acp.html>.

Inland Area Planning: With a goal of establishing ties to local response plans, EPA has worked with regional NYSDEC offices and several counties to develop the initial draft ACP revisions for Inland New York State. The draft plan is based on the USCG MSO Buffalo/Eastern Great Lakes ACP geographic response plan, and includes a summary of information pulled from various sources, including NYSDEC, NYSEMO, National Heritage program, and county emergency Operations Plans. In addition, information from the NY/NJ Regional Contingency Plan (e.g. EPA/Coast Guard boundaries, select RRT agency support), the EPA Region II SOP Manual (e.g. select equipment and services available) and US/Canada Joint Inland Plan (e.g. phone numbers, customs and immigration procedures for border crossing) is incorporated. Final revisions are expected to be completed by the end of FY-99.

RRT Operations Manual: The RRT membership listing for the NY/NJ Regional Response Team Operations Manual was circulated among attendees during the December 1998 RRT meeting for updating. Modifications to the Operations Manual will be made to reflect membership changes, standing committee structures, RRT Co-Chair and Coordinator roles and responsibilities, the new RRT website, etc. The revised Operations Manual is expected to be distributed in the second quarter of FY-99.

Long Island Sound Notifications/Concurrence: In preparation for the development of expedited decision-making and potential MOUs for alternative technologies, the Long Island Sound Area Committee held a stakeholder symposium in January 1998, involving federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over the Sound. The target audience for the symposium was state water quality and fisheries personnel, as well as environmental organizations. Follow-up meetings were held, culminating in the development, submittal, review, and approval of a dispersant plan during the September PREP exercise. The next step is to formally capture the advances that were made by putting the process into the Area Contingency Plan.

C. TRAINING

CAMEO Training - EPA provided 10 courses to 93 local responders during the year. This includes five State trainers from New York and New Jersey who were trained and given the NOAA Certification Exam to become fully certified trainers. Course dates and locations were:

1/27/98	Edison, NJ	8/13/98	Train the Trainer, Edison, NJ
2/6/98	Montour Falls, NY	10/23/98	SUNY, Stony Brook, NY
4/2/98	Atlantic City, NJ	11/20/98	SUNY, Stony Brook, NY
7/21/98	NJSP, W. Trenton, NJ	12/16/98	Edison, NJ

III. PERSONNEL CHANGES

CDR Scot Graham relieved CDR Steve Garrity as Chief of the Planning and Response Branch at the First Coast Guard District's Marine Safety Division, and as Alternate RRT Co-Chair for the Coast Guard.

CAPT Richard Bennis relieved CAPT Richard Vlaun as Commanding Officer, USCG Activities NY and COTP NY.

CAPT Gregory Adams relieved CAPT John Veentjer as Commanding Officer, USCG MSO Philadelphia and COTP Philadelphia.

CDR Steven Hardy relieved CDR Glenn Wiltshire as Commanding Officer, USCG MSO Buffalo and COTP Buffalo.

CAPT Gary Van Den Berg replaced CDR Gerry Wheaton as the primary DOC-NOAA RRT representative and trustee point of contact.

IV. ISSUES REQUIRING RRT ACTION

MSO Buffalo has a PREP exercise scheduled for September 1999.

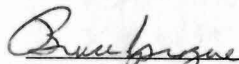
V. FUTURE PLANS

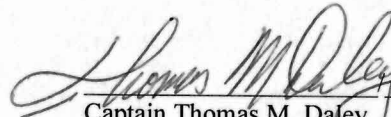
NRT/RRT Co-Chairs meeting in Las Vegas, February 2-4, 1999.

Monitor State and local government agencies' WMD planning, training, and exercise activities.

The next RRT II meeting is tentatively scheduled for the week of May 12-13, 1998, at a location to be identified in New Jersey. Updates will be posted on First Class and on the RRT II web page at <http://www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/rrt/rrt2.html>.

Any questions regarding items in this Semi-Annual RRT Report should be addressed to LTJG Rob Hemp, USCG RRT Coordinator (rhemp@d1.uscg.mil, phone # 617-223-8197), or to Steve Touw, EPA RRT Coordinator, (touw.steve@epa.gov, 732-906-6900).

 12/3/99
Bruce E. Sprague (Date)
EPA Co-Chair
U.S. EPA, Region II

 1/28/99
Captain Thomas M. Daley (Date)
U.S. Coast Guard Co-Chair
First Coast Guard District