

January 2, 2001

Mr. John Gustafson
Executive Director
US National Response Team
USEPA Headquarters - MC 5104A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Gustafson,

As you know, Section 300.115 of the National Contingency Plan requests that Regional Response Teams 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 semi-annual report is submitted for the period of July 01 to December 31, 2000.

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. MAJOR/NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

RADIOACTIVE DEVICES

Location: Chews Landing, NJ

Date: August 6, 2000

On August 6, EPA was notified of the discovery of radioactive devices at a residential property in Chews Landing, Gloucester Township, NJ. The devices were discovered by a friend of the property owner while scanning the grounds with a metal detector. The devices contained a stamped label with the words "Radioactive Poison Inside." EPA responded as the local fire and police departments and the Camden County HAZMAT team were in the process of conducting a site investigation. The local fire department conducted the physical entry and obtained low-level radiation readings. The device locations were marked and the area secured. Further contacts with NJ DEP Radiation Response personnel and the US Navy identified the devices as old "Dock Markers," which were property of the Navy. EPA communicated the entry results to the Navy, who subsequently deployed a response team to evaluate, remove and dispose of the devices and any associated contamination.

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY FLOODING

Location: Sussex & Morris Counties, NJ

Date: August 2000

On August 14, 2000, EPA inspected the flood-impacted areas of northwest New Jersey which had received a presidential disaster declaration. EPA OSCs met with local Incident Commanders, facility operators, the Sussex County OEM Coordinator, Army Corps of Engineers representatives, and FEMA representatives. Within the impacted areas, the primary industrial facility that was affected was the Compac facility in Stanhope. Materials at the facility included latex, water based adhesives and a biocide containing less than 1% arsenic. The biocide was pumped from the facility and was safely staged in a vacuum truck. EPA OSCs also provided information to the Mayor in the impacted town of Sparta, and to US Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (11th Congressional District).

AMMONIA RELEASE FROM LEAKING RAILCAR

Location: Fort Edward, NY

Date: August 30, 2000

On August 30, rail yard personnel at the Fort Edward train station, located in Washington Township, NY, discovered an 80 ton pressurized anhydrous ammonia tank car venting. The tank car was moved to the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail yard. Local fire departments with HAZMAT personnel along with the HAZMAT response teams from Finch Pruyn and Co., and General Electric Silicone performed the initial entry to survey the cause of the venting and stop it. It was determined that the venting could not be stopped with the local resources, and the

decision was made to evacuate the town. The decision for the evacuation zone was based on “smelling the ammonia” and not on any instrument readings. An estimated 800 residents were evacuated at 3:00 am, and fifty-six people were sent to local hospitals. EPA’s OSC arrived on the scene at 12 p.m., and was briefed by the local fire chief. The OSC informed the chief of the support that the federal government could provide to the emergency. The chief asked EPA to provide ongoing air monitoring at the site and in the surrounding areas, and to conduct air monitoring of homes before residents were allowed back into their homes. EPA’s support contractor and the Atlantic Strike Team were activated, along with an additional OSC. CP Rail contracted a local environmental response company to try to cap the venting flange. Three entries in Level “A” were made to cap the flange; however, all attempts failed. CP then contracted a second, larger environmental company, based in Ohio, who arrived on-scene about 3:00 am on August 31st. The contractor attempted to lower the pressure in the railcar to freeze the vapors and then change the flange. By 6:00 p.m., the pressure had been lowered, but the material did not freeze as anticipated. The contractor then began pumping vapor from the leaking railcar, compressing it into liquid form and putting it back in the railcar to further reduce the head pressure. Work was suspended at midnight. The following morning, a truckload of liquid nitrogen was mobilized and connected to the leaking rail car. As the nitrogen entered the railcar, it aided in the transfer of ammonia to the receiving car while displacing the ammonia in the headspace, thereby preventing the further release of ammonia and allowing responders to assess the area of the leak. By the afternoon of September 1st, the contractor was able to successfully apply a modified cap over the leak. The Erie Barge Canal, which had been shut down to boat traffic, was reopened. At 5:30 p.m., following the screening of 22 homes for ammonia fumes, a partial lifting of the evacuation was announced, followed by a total lifting of the evacuation zone at 6:30 p.m.

MEDIUM OIL SPILL (DIESEL FUEL)

USS DETROIT

ACTIVITIES NEW YORK

Location: Sandy Hook Bay, NJ

Date: September 14, 2000

A tug maneuvering alongside the USS DETROIT put a hole in one of DETROIT’s fuel tanks, spilling 30,000 gallons of #2 DFM into Sandy Hook Bay. USCG Activities New York (ACTNY) responded as FOSC for the spill. Contractors deployed 18,000 feet of containment boom in environmentally sensitive areas around Sandy Hook and Naval Weapons Station Earle. Approximately 1,000 gallons were recovered; the remainder was lost to evaporation. The weather cooperated by forcing the largest accumulation of product north into the center of the lower bay, and then southeast into open waters. The spill attracted moderate media attention, mostly good coverage for the Navy and USCG. Lesson learned: dispersants were available locally, but there were no aircraft rigged for dispersants in the local area. ACTNY is aggressively addressing this shortfall with its industry partners. Consideration of dispersant use must be addressed very early in a spill to allow for equipment mobilization and stakeholder consideration.

READE MANUFACTURING EXPLOSION

Location: Manchester Township, NJ

Date: September 29, 2000

On September 29, 2000 at approximately 0945 hours, an explosion occurred at the Reade Manufacturing facility, located in Manchester Township, NJ. The facility mills magnesium scrap metal into magnesium powder for re-sale. In a routine operation, scrap magnesium was transferred from a bin to a table for sorting prior to milling. During the sorting process, an explosion occurred. One employee was injured and subsequently died at the hospital. The cause of the incident is believed to be a result of impurities in a batch of powdered magnesium that originated from a US Navy Facility. The material involved dated back to the 1960’s. Reade Mfg. purchased this material in 1995 from the US Government surplus. EPA and NJDEP were on-scene at the site of the explosion and worked with the Navy and the responsible party to address clean-up operations. Navy experts collected samples to run analytical tests on the materials involved in the incident. On October 10 and 11, between the hours of 11pm - 3am, Army EOD (760th, Ft Dix) removed 4 drums of the material linked to the explosion. The 4 drums were previously staged in a warehouse containing large amounts of magnesium powders and scrap. Issues remaining at the Reade facility include clean-up and disposal of any of the explosive material that may have worked its way into the process area(s)

prior to the September 29th incident. The Navy tentatively classified the material as Magnesium Teflon Viton (MTV) and examined potential remediation techniques.

MINOR OIL SPILL/POTENTIAL MEDIUM (#2 FUEL OIL)

M/V ALBEMARLE ISLAND

ACTIVITIES NEW YORK

Location: Howland Hook Container Yard, Staten Island, New York

Date: December 05, 2000

On December 5th, the M/V ALBEMARLE ISLAND struck its starboard quarter against the pier when departing the Howland Hook Container Yard, resulting in a crack and discharge of approximately 330 gallons of the 19,000 gallons of #2 fuel oil on board into the Kill Van Kull. After returning to the container terminal, the leak was secured, and the vessel proceeded to anchorage for repairs. No on-water cleanup was employed.

MARINE EVENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

OPERATION SAIL/INTERNATIONAL NAVAL REVIEW, NEW YORK

ACTIVITIES NEW YORK

Location: Port of New York/New Jersey

Date: July 1-9, 2000

The Port of New York/New Jersey experienced the largest Marine Event of National Significance in its history (Operation Sail New York/International Naval Review 2000) from July 1 - 9, 2000 that drove significant Regional planning and preparedness dividends in ICS/Unified Command coordination and contingency response. The events culminated over 2 years of planning for preparedness for the safety and security of the operations. ActNY carried the substantial load of responsibilities, and coordinated a Unified Command. ICS protocol was utilized in planning for the support and execution of the mission surrounding the events' impact to the ports and maritime public.

B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS

Train Derailment Tabletop Exercise - Sayreville, NJ

A hazardous materials "table-top" training exercise was held at the Middlesex Fire Academy on August 14th. This exercise, sponsored by CONRAIL, was attended by local, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as private sector companies. The focus of the exercise was a CONRAIL train derailment in Newark, adjacent to the NJ Turnpike and Newark airport.

Plane Crash Tabletop Exercise – Rochester, NY

Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Buffalo, Monroe County Office of Emergency Preparedness, and the New York State Emergency Management Office co-sponsored a September tabletop exercise focused on a plane crash in the waters of Lake Ontario. The objectives for this exercise were to identify initial response actions, review notification procedures, and identify shortfalls and areas for improvement in responding to a plane crash in the water. The exercise accomplished all of these objectives as well as the goals of enhancing interagency cooperation and improving the capability of local agencies to respond to an airline crash on the water.

Response Tabletop Exercise – Erie County, NY

This unique exercise was co-sponsored with the Erie County LEPC in October and had participants address four different scenarios during the course of the exercise. The purpose of the first two scenarios used in the exercise was to evaluate measures for responding to mystery drums located on the water or found on the beach. The third scenario included a radiological element in the exercise to enable the testing and evaluation of Erie County's Radiological Emergency Response Annex. The final exercise scenario addressed a WMD terrorist incident designed to test the Domestic Preparedness Annex to the Erie County Emergency Response Plan. In relation to the scenarios including the mystery drums, the exercise participants developed two different sets of protocols for responding to the scenarios presented during the exercise. A waterside response would primarily fall under the responsibility of the U.S. Coast Guard and a shoreside response would be directed by the responding state and local agencies.

Cross Border Functional Tabletop Exercise – Niagara Falls, NY

The October exercise was sponsored by the International Joint Committee on Emergency Planning for the Niagara Region and the Niagara County LEPC. The scenario for the exercise was a train car leaking Chlorine on the railroad bridge over the Niagara River. Emergency responders addressed several issues concerning the HAZMAT release and cross border coordination of response operations. MSO Buffalo participated in the exercise and provided training on the use of ICS and command post operations.

Radiological Exercise – University of Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

MSO Buffalo assisted the University of Buffalo with development and facilitation of a tabletop exercise in November concerning the theft of nuclear material from the research reactor located on the University campus. The objectives for the exercise were to review agency responsibilities, increase familiarity with operational capabilities, and enhance interagency coordination. The exercise was conducted in partnership with the Erie County LEPC and the State University of Buffalo.

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. For instance: MSO Buffalo conducted an unannounced exercise at the Sprague Energy terminal in Oswego, NY in July. The primary objectives for the exercise were to: a) test notification procedures as identified in the facility response plan; b) demonstrate the ability to assemble the appropriate spill response personnel as outlined in the facility response plan; c) deploy the facility’s containment boom; and, d) demonstrate effective communications to coordinate response efforts. An exercise report is available upon request.

During the period of this report, EPA Region II conducted unannounced, government-initiated exercises under the PREP program at the following locations:

Sunoco	Piscataway, NJ	August 4th
Eastman Kodak	Rochester, NY	August 23rd
ALCOA	Massena, NY	August 29th
Exxon Turbo Oil	Linden, NJ	September 22nd
Anheuser-Busch	Elizabeth, NJ	September 26th

Workshops

During the week of July 17th, EPA Region 2, in coordination with USCG-ACTNY, conducted two FRP/OPA seminars for the regulated community. Approximately 84 people from fifty FRP-regulated facilities attended the seminars.

In September, the Long Island Sound Area Committee welcomed Coast Guard headquarters and contractor personnel to train and facilitate a two-day Expedited Ecological Risk Assessment workshop. This was the final workshop in a series to assemble a guidebook for Area Committees to aid in implementing this procedure, which provides a structured, semi-quantitative method of comparing the environmental impacts and benefits of different spill response countermeasures on a given scenario. The guidebook is being revised at the national level with input from this workshop. The results of the workshop have been distributed to participants; both a report and further scenarios require additional Area Committee work; the Area Committee approach is being discussed.

The ACTNY Engineering Officer and Environmental Protection Branch Chief attended a NY Harbor tour with "The Mid-Atlantic Federal Partners for the Environment" on 18 September. This tour, sponsored by the National Park Service, discussed future development in NY Harbor balanced against environmental concerns. Of interest was the predicted dramatic increase in water taxi services over the next several years.

Two extensive reports will soon be released concerning NY harbor. ACTNY has been involved with the stakeholders during the creation of both reports. The Harbor Navigation Study was developed jointly by the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Port Authority. The study’s recommendation is that NY Harbor

should be dredged to 50' by 2009 to keep up with anticipated cargo demands. The second report is the Comprehensive Port Improvement Plan (CPIP) being created by USACE and the EPA. The CPIP will identify economically viable and environmentally protective initiatives that will manage the needs of the port.

On October 20th, the US Public Health Service coordinated a day-long visit for several RRT-member agencies to the US Dept of Agriculture's Plum Island Animal Disease Research Center on Plum Island, NY (just off Greenport, Long Island, NY). Participants were given an in-depth indoctrination to increase awareness of the unique emergency response considerations associated with this sensitive facility.

MSO Buffalo Fire Fighting Seminars

MSO Buffalo conducted 3 seminars on "Responding to Fires at Waterfront Marinas." The seminars, conducted in Dunkirk, Clayton, and Hamburg, New York, were attended by 221 local fire fighters and emergency responders in July. All of the attendees felt the seminar heightened their awareness of the difficulties in effectively responding to a fire at a waterfront marina. Representatives from the New York Office of Fire Prevention and Control attended the Clayton seminar and stated that, based on the content and quality of the seminar, the seminar will be turned into a state-certified course for fire fighters – the first such state-certified course on marina fire fighting in the country.

C. RRT MEETINGS

There were no full RRT meetings during this period.

A RRT executive meeting of the Co-Chairs and State representatives was held in Edison, NJ on December 12th to discuss RRT goals. Progress was made on finalizing the pending dispersant MOU revision. Plans for another management meeting and a full RRT meeting were also set.

D. SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

Nothing to report for this time period.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS, CONTINGENCY PLANNING & TRAINING

A. PREPAREDNESS

EPA Headquarters has awarded an emergency preparedness grant to the St. Regis Mohawk Nation for the project period of January 1, 2001-Dec.31, 2001, in the amount of \$22,500. The local match brings the total grant budget to \$30,000. The grant will focus on both community awareness and risk communication and development of a community-wide chemical accident prevention program.

B. PLANNING

On 12/13, EPA Regions I and II met with Environment Canada on development of the regional annex for spills impacting the border of Quebec with New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. This is a regional annex to the joint inland plan that had been executed between EPA and Environment Canada in 1994. A similar annex is being prepared with EPA Region V and Environment Canada for the inland border of the US (Minnesota, Michigan and New York) along the province of Ontario.

C. TRAINING

A CAMEO course was conducted by EPA Region II during the week of July 17th in Edison, NJ for six advanced students from the Coast Guard and Union City, NJ EMO.

EPA conducted a CAMEO/ALOHA course at the Montour Falls, NY Fire Academy during the week of November 13-17, 2000. Eleven students, including five from various offices of Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Air Quality Assessment, completed the course.

III. PERSONNEL CHANGES

CAPT John L. Grenier arrived as Chief, Marine Safety Division, First Coast Guard District and will serve as Co-Chair of RRT II.

David Sweeney (NJDEP) has replaced Bob Van Fossen as the alternate RRT representative for New Jersey.

IV. ISSUES REQUIRING RRT ACTION

A WMD exercise is planned in the Port of New York for September 2001, with little early involvement of NRS agencies. RRT members need to emphasize the NRS roles and capabilities. The Co-chairs will raise the Emergency/Environmental agency dichotomy in WMD roles at the NRT/RRT Co-chairs meeting.

The new RRT II dispersant MOU remains unresolved pending NJ and DOI concurrence. The Coast Guard will prepare a letter from its Co-Chair to the NJDEP to seek the state's concurrence on the MOU, and the amendment to resolve NJ's concerns about the relocated boundary, before the March RRT meeting.

An introspective RRT management session is planned for February 9th to consider RRT focus areas and goals.

V. FUTURE PLANS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

RRT II management meeting will take place on February 9, 2001 at the EPA regional office at 290 Broadway, NYC.

A full RRT meeting is scheduled for March 7-8 at the Atlantic Strike Team facility at Fort Dix, NJ.

Any questions regarding items in this Semi-Annual RRT Report should be addressed to Scott Lundgren, acting USCG RRT Coordinator (Slundgren@d1.uscg.mil), phone # 617-223-8434), or to Steve Touw, EPA RRT Coordinator, (touw.steve@epa.gov, 732-906-6900).

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Bruce Sprague (Date)
EPA Co-Chair
U.S. EPA, Region II

_____/_____
Captain John Grenier (Date)
U.S. Coast Guard Co-Chair
First Coast Guard District