

RRT III Fact Sheet

www.uscg.mil/lantarea/rrt

THE REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

Who Are Those Folks?

Our Introduction ...

The Regional Response Team (RRT) is one part of our State and Federal government's commitment to work efficiently to minimize the adverse effects of oil and chemical incidents on human health and safety and the environment. Region III includes the area of the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

This Fact Sheet will help you understand the organization and the responsibilities of the RRT and what this group does and can do for you. Whether you are a concerned taxpayer, a member of industry, a local, State, or Federal responder, your understanding of the RRT capabilities is important to our members.

The Players...

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) serve as RRT Co-Chairs. The Standing Team includes the following State membership:

Delaware
District of Columbia
Maryland
Pennsylvania
Virginia
West Virginia

There are 13 Federal agency members of RRT III:

USEPA*
USCG*
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry*
Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce*
Department of Defense*
Department of Energy
Department of HHS
Department of the Interior*
Department of Justice
Department of Labor
Federal Emerg. Mgt. Agency*
General Services Admin.*

* active participant

Although they are in a non-voting status, a number of industry representatives and private organizations make significant contributions to the success of our RRT.

Established by...

The regulatory framework that established the RRT is the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, more commonly called the National Contingency Plan (NCP). Mandated by Federal statutes, the NCP presents our national intent to prepare for and respond to oil spills and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants. The NCP outlines, within a National Response System, the roles of a National Response Team, ten RRTs, and numerous Area Committees.

To Do What?

The Federal members of these organizations are tasked with the following: planning for oil and hazardous substance emergencies; coordinating this planning with each other; coordinating planning with affected States, local governments, and private entities, and; making facilities or resources available that would be useful in a response situation.

Here are a few examples:

- A State member of the RRT, responding to a large-scale incident, could contact the RRT Co-Chairs and request that portions or all of the RRT be activated to assist.

- NOAA's Scientific Support Coordinator could provide vital information on the sensitive environmental resources at risk.

- The Environmental Protection Agency could provide technical assistance in sampling and analyzing air, water, or soil to assist in health and safety decisions.

- The Department of the Interior, through the Fish and Service, would oversee the collection and treatment of oiled birds.

- Selected RRT members would be notified and would use our established policies to decide if a chemical countermeasure would reduce the adverse environmental impacts of an oil spill.

These are a few of the many potential assistance roles that the RRT can play when the response demands exceed the capabilities of the responding agency.

What's the routine?

RRT III meets regularly at varying locations within the Region to maintain strong work relationships, exchange information, and develop policies governing effective response tools and protocols. Beyond the meetings, which provide the forum for adopting policies and discussing lessons learned from responses, RRT III

also maintains important work groups where agency staffs focus on specific priority tasks. It is through work group efforts that our RRT has produced:

- reasoned policies on potential use of dispersants and in-situ burning of spilled oil;

- stronger notification and response communication protocols;

- a shoreline countermeasures manual to enhance protection and cleanup of oiled habitats and;

- a protocol for evaluating alternative response tools that might be recommended for oil spill response.

These accomplishments and much more information are maintained in our Regional Contingency Plan (RCP). This plan is updated regularly and it contains policy, response contacts, and details on response resources and coordination.

RRT III takes pride in its history of assistance to the on-scene coordinators (OSCs). The OSC is the federal official pre-designated by USEPA or the USCG to coordinate and direct response. We are equally proud of our efforts to develop policies on the less traditional oil spill response tools that, in some situations, could reduce the net adverse impacts of spilled oil on the environment.

We also want to ensure that local responders, private groups, and the general public understand how the RRT might help. Our meetings are

open to the public and we invite participation and questions about our activities and capabilities. RRT III maintains an Internet web site at the above address where upcoming meeting dates and locations are provided.

Contact our CG or EPA RRT Coordinator to request more information or if you want to suggest an agenda item for RRT discussion. The phone numbers are: EPA - (215) 566-3256
CG - (757) 398-6620

The RRT III Outreach Work Group is comprised of representatives from the Department of the Interior, the Coast Guard, and the Environmental Protection Agency.