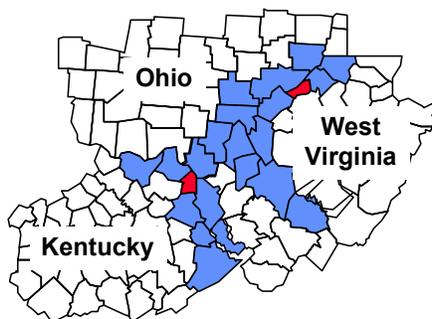


HUNTINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE OPERATIONS PLAN



Overview

The Huntington Environmental Response Operations (HERO) Plan represents a unification of Area Committee and Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) responsibilities and activities along portions of the Ohio and Elk Rivers. Managing a response plan in such a large geographic area calls for a close link between the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and LEPC plans. The HERO Plan is an excellent example of a collaborated planning effort. Below are some of its most successful features:

- Can be used for any emergency (natural disaster or man-made incident);
- Based on historical experience rather than scenarios;
- Emphasizes the Incident Command System used by LEPCs; and
- Satisfies planning requirements for Subareas in three Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regions.

Background

The HERO Plan geographic area of responsibility generally follows the Ohio, Kanawha, and Big Sandy Rivers as they wind through Ohio, West Virginia, and into Kentucky. It covers approximately 26 counties in Ohio, 19 counties in Kentucky, and all but seven counties in West Virginia. This area is home to “Chemical Valley”, the highest concentration of chemical manufacturers in the United States. The HERO Plan was developed by the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office (MSO) Huntington in cooperation with other federal, state, and local agencies, and industry. The committee membership includes representatives from three EPA regions, dozens of LEPCs from all three states, and representatives from local oil and chemical industry facilities.

Routine communication between the members occurs daily through telephone calls, facsimiles, and meetings. During an incident, members often conduct meetings via teleconference. The committee meets formally every three months, and is responsible for an annual review of the plan.



Planning Committee Profile

- One hundred members from federal, state, local agencies and local industry
- Meets every 3 months
- Responsible for annual review and distribution of plan
- Teleconferencing during incidents

Coordinated Planning Activities

The HERO Plan is not a typical ACP or Facility Response Plan (FRP) as designated by the National Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan. It covers portions of three EPA planning areas rather than standing alone as an ACP. Therefore, it must be compatible with and written for incorporation into these three plans. The HERO Plan is a response command, control, and coordination document which focuses on functional roles and responsibilities for responders, regardless of incident size or scope. The plan does not address the worst-case scenario, but does examine past incidents. It builds on lessons learned to improve response communication, coordination, and efficiency. The main goal of the plan is to identify and improve the ways in which the U.S. Coast Guard coordinates its activities with government and industry bodies. The HERO Plan provides general command and operations information, and a "wire diagram" for all responders. This details responders' responsibilities, job descriptions, and working relationships. The plan also contains a detailed response equipment inventory.

The plan is organized in relation to the standard Incident Command System / Unified Command Structure (ICS/UCS). It is organized into the ICS sections of Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance / Administration. During response operations, the plan details the specific functions and responsibilities of each of these sections for carrying out an effective response.

Organization. The plan describes the response structure used in the event of a pollution emergency for which the Commanding Officer of MSO Huntington is the designated federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC). The State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC) may be a representative of one or more of the three states. For other emergencies (floods, fires, etc.), the HERO Plan will be subordinate to the controlling state or local emergency plan. Because of the active involvement of the LEPCs and industry planners in the area, the response organization position descriptions and functional responsibilities are identical to those used by LEPCs and industry in response to other emergencies. This matching of incident command details assures effective integration of response resources, regardless of incident type or incident lead.

Incident Analysis

Incident. On February 28, 1997, an unexpected storm hit the Ohio River Valley. Lasting until March 2, 1997, the storm dumped as much as 12 inches of rain within a fifty-mile radius of Huntington, WV. This deluge raised river levels up to 10 feet above flood levels and caused the evacuation of thousands of people in residential and business districts.

For the next 12 days, the resulting flood emergency taxed response resources throughout the HERO planning area. In part, as a result of contacts and coordination established during HERO planning meetings, emergency operations centers throughout the tri-state area were able to contact MSO Huntington for additional U.S. Coast Guard assistance. The Lawrence County, Ohio, Office of Emergency Services (OES) requested and received U.S. Coast Guard assistance in evacuating 100 people stranded by the flood. In Cabell County, West Virginia, the OES requested and received similar help. In Scioto County, Ohio, the OES was provided helicopter support. While these counties relied on their own emergency plans for their internal operations, the links that had been forged between their plans and the HERO Plan contributed greatly to an efficient and effective response.

Point of Contact



Chief, Port Operations
 (304) 529-5524
 USCG MSO Huntington, WV