

REGION I REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

January 16, 2003

Dear:

As directed by Section 300.115 of the National Contingency Plan, the Region I Regional Response Team Report is submitted for the period of January 1, 2002 through December 31, 2002.

In an effort to adhere to the guidelines provided at this past year's NRT / RRT Co-Chairs meeting, this report is streamlined to cover only incidents and activities of national significance / interest.

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:

Nothing of national significance to report.

B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS:

Exercises:

CANUSLANT: On June 24-28, 2002 a CANUSLANT exercise was held in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada. The exercise consisted of a tabletop exercise, followed by a series of breakout sessions on issues identified as priorities by the Canadian/U.S. joint response team for the Atlantic region. Each breakout group was provided a series of background papers on issues selected for discussion during CANUSLANT 2002. The format used for CANUSLANT 2002 was a success, 86% of attendees felt the exercise format was effective in accomplishing the exercise objectives. Alternative exercise formats can rejuvenate response community.

Massachusetts / New Hampshire Cross-Border Anti-Terrorism/WMD Exercise: On May 30, 2002 several EPA On-Scene Coordinators and emergency response contractor personnel participated in an emergency response exercise involving first responders from more than 20 local and state agencies in NH and MA. The exercise was designed to evaluate the capacity of area public safety agencies to respond to a large-scale disaster that included a terrorist act, mass casualties, and environmental contamination. The scenario involved a simulated terrorist incident at the Nashua, NH wastewater treatment plant and a subsequent chemical incident at Hussey Plastics in Tyngsboro, MA. EPA personnel were intimately involved in the exercise development and planning and served as exercise controllers. The EPA field response included deployment of On-Scene Coordinators to the two separate incident sites and the launching of EPA's response boat to the Merrimack River to simulate water quality sampling. For a more detailed summary and lessons learned please contact the EPA RRT Coordinator.

United States/Canada Cross-Border Exercise/Notification Drill: On July 29, 2002 two EPA On-

Scene Coordinators and response contractor personnel participated in a terrorism response exercise at the U.S. Customs border crossing in Houlton, ME. The scenario involved the release of sarin gas and an explosive device in a vehicle attempting to enter the U.S. from Canada. Representatives from local police and fire in Maine and Canada, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Health, Maine National Guard Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, U.S. Customs, Canadian Customs and Environment Canada participated in the exercise. EPA's response contractor made a Level-A entry into the hot zone to simulate chemical agent monitoring and sampling. For more information contact the EPA RRT Coordinator.

PREP: Industry-led PREP exercises occurred during this report period with various levels of federal participation. The Mirant Facility conducted a PREP drill in MSO Providence with great success.

Unannounced Industry PREP Drills:

The Coast Guard routinely conducted 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 in each CG Captain of the Port zone.

Workshops/Seminars:

Sampling Workshop: In response to lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks, the EPA hosted a sampling meeting and tabletop drill on July 16, 2002, in Chelmsford, Massachusetts to discuss the issues related to sampling and analysis during a large-scale, multi-organizational, emergency response. Attending the meeting were representatives from Federal, State, local and tribal environmental and health organizations located throughout the New England area. The meeting provided participants a forum to discuss sampling techniques, data analysis and response communications. Additional meetings will be held to create standardized protocols for sample and data management approved by response and supporting health organizations.

C. RRT MEETINGS:

RRT I's spring meeting was held February 7, 2002. The meeting included a report out from the member agencies on their activities since the 09/11 and anthrax attacks. Many member agencies committed significant resources to the response to those incidents and were trying to determine their new normal operations as a result of the consequences of those two incidents. The fall meeting was held October 23, 2002. The agenda focused on coordination between agencies for exercises, drills and resources. Several action items resulted from the meeting including giving the REDPAC an advisory role to the RRT and increasing FEMA and FBI participation. For a more detailed summary please contact the USCG RRT coordinator.

D. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES:

A subgroup of the RRT is working to create implementation strategies for the Endangered Species Act requirements and planning/response/post-response functions under the NCP. While the MOA envisions each Area Committee initiating this planning process independently with the Services (USFWS and NMFS), limited time and resources at the field level led to the regionalization of this project. Several planning meetings have been held with a goal of providing standardized education, recommended methods, and priorities for the region.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A. TRAINING:

The EPA hosted WMD awareness training for its local, state and federal partner agencies. EPA also hosted a one-day Radiological Dispersion Device Workshop attended by state and federal response partners.

ICS training continues at the Area Committee / Local Spill Management Team level throughout the Coastal Zone.

B. FEDERAL/STATE PLANNING EFFORTS /EFFORTS TO IMPROVE STATE AND LOCAL COORDINATION:

The RRT has reached out to FEMA for increased involvement in the RRT and to assume a lead role in exercise coordination between state, federal and local agencies.

Coastal Area Planning:

Several Coastal Area Committees are actively updating their plans to the new ICS-format prescribed by a September 2000 Commandant Instruction.

C. FEDERAL PLANNING EFFORTS IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH NATIVE AMERICANS:

On 10/30, The EPA Co-Chair made a presentation on the National Response and the role of the Regional Response Team (RRT) at the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), Inc. Conference and Expo held in Connecticut. The presentation focused on the resources On-Scene Coordinators can bring to emergency incidents that may impact Tribal lands and the need for Tribes to be active participants in the planning and coordination conducted by the RRT.

III. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Contact D1(mor)

IV. ISSUES REQUIRING RRT ACTION:

Issues of significance for potential RRT action involve the following:

- Adopt recommended sampling procedures and data management policy.
- Share radiological response procedures and capabilities.
- Improve communication regarding regional exercises requiring RRT member participation.

V. FUTURE PLANS.

Next RRT meeting:

The Region I RRT plans to hold a meeting in April of 2003. The exact location and date is TBD. Updates and minutes will be posted at <http://www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/rrt/rrt1.html>.

Next JRT meeting:

The next JRT meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 2003 in Halifax. This meeting will initiate the preplanning of the CANUSLANT 2004 exercise. For further information contact, D1(mor).

CONCURRENCE:

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(Date)
EPA Co-Chair
U.S. EPA, Region I

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(Date)
U.S. Coast Guard Co-Chair
First Coast Guard District