

## **REGION I REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM 2004 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Period of Report: January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004**

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

Dear Mr. Gustafson:

As required by Section 300.115 of the National Contingency Plan, the Region I Regional Response Team Report is submitted for the period of January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004.

### **I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. MAJOR/NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

BUCKEYE PIPELINE LEAK: At 1334 on July 11, 2004, Coast Guard received a report from Buckeye Pipeline that there was a release of gasoline from a storm drain into the Quinnipiac River in New Haven, CT. The source of the spill was determined to be a section of the Buckeye Pipeline. 40,000 gallons of product was spilled. Unified Command was implemented for the pipeline response, and included a Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC), State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC), a senior fire department official and the responsible party. Initially, there were difficulties in determining the exact location of the damaged pipeline. Eventually, the damaged section of pipeline was isolated and replaced. There was no substantial impact to the local economy or environment.

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION: The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1, United States Coast Guard (USCG) and numerous federal, state and local response agencies pre-deployed response assets for the 2004 Democratic National Convention (DNC) held on July 26 through July 30, 2004, at the Fleet Center in Boston, MA. The DNC was declared a National Special Security Event (NSSE). The United States Secret Service (USSS) was designated to provide the Principal Federal Official.

EPA and the USCG were involved in extensive advanced planning and coordination for an 18-month period leading up to the DNC. Security planners emphasized the importance of prevention and deterrence. Also, response planners recognized the need to be prepared to respond tactically to any and all threats that could arise. As a result, EPA and the USCG, as part of the federal response community, pre-deployed response teams consisting of On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs), special teams, and contractors, and implemented the necessary command structure to respond and coordinate with the multi-agency response community. Due to significant staffing needs, EPA OSCs were also provided by Region I's backup regions – Regions II and VIII.

EPA Region I coordinated federal hazardous material (HAZMAT) response support with the

USCG. EPA and the USCG both staffed the USSS-lead Multi Agency Communications Center (MACC) at the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center in Cambridge, MA, and passed information from the MACC to their respective Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). EPA's Area Command was located at the Region I EOC (a.k.a the Regional Response Center) at One Congress Street in Boston. The USCG Command Post was located a short distance from the Fleet Center at the USCG Marine Safety Office (MSO) at 455 Commercial Street, on the Boston waterfront. EPA staffed liaison positions at the USCG Command Post. EPA's backup EOC in Chelmsford, MA was activated and available if needed.

EPA staffed liaison positions at the City of Boston EOC, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Regional Operations Center (ROC) in Maynard, MA, the Joint Information Center (JIC) at Boston Police HQ, and the Interagency Modeling Group at Boston Police Headquarters. In addition, EPA designated two OSCs available to staff the FBI Joint Operations Center (JOC) if it were activated in response to a credible terrorist threat or incident.

EPA and the USCG deployed five Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/Level-A capable HAZMAT teams for the DNC. Two of these teams were staged near the Fleet Center for crisis management operations under the direction of the USSS-lead Joint Hazard Assessment Team (JHAT). These teams were comprised solely of USCG Atlantic Strike Team (AST) personnel.

The other three HAZMAT teams were staged at MSO Boston for both crisis and consequence management operations. Each team consisted of twelve EPA and Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) contractor personnel and was capable of conducting real-time air monitoring, sampling, and technical assistance. Each team covered a 12-hour shift (explained in the next section). The fifth team was comprised of USCG AST personnel.

In general, the DNC deployment went extremely well. All response assets were well organized and had clear roles and responsibilities. Personnel gained valuable experience and training with ICS during both the pre-event planning and the actual deployment. The communications mechanisms established under the ICS structure and Web Emergency Operations Center (WebEOC) worked as envisioned to track assets and exchange real-time situational updates.

Major lessons learned are as follows:

- need for a central command post;
- need for common electronic communication technologies for all responding agencies, e.g. WebEOC;
- additional Incident Command System (ICS) training and practice needed for all personnel, especially administrative, information technology (IT), logistics, finance, and personnel support staff; and
- need for additional health and safety evaluations on shift scheduling.

PLEASANT STREET MERCURY SITE: In late September 2004, four individuals broke into a New England Gas Company-owned building on Tidewater Avenue in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The building housed liquid mercury collected from gas regulators for either reclamation or disposal, but was not properly marked or permitted. The vandalism resulted in a release of mercury to an apartment complex where two of the individuals lived.

On October 22, 2004, mercury was discovered in the parking lot of the complex. Local and state officials and representatives of the gas company and their contractors responded that day to the scene, and the apartment complex was monitored for mercury. Due to elevated levels of mercury in the indoor air, residents of the building were immediately relocated to a nearby hotel. EPA and their START contractor were on-scene the following morning and assisted the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) in monitoring the remaining four buildings in the complex. Due to elevated levels of mercury, the residents of one of those buildings were relocated that day. Screening levels in the other three buildings were in a number of instances higher than the recommended action level for indoor residential air (1 microgram per cubic meter), substantially less than the other two buildings. The contractor for the gas company confirmed those results the following day, October 24. Consensus was reached among the responding agencies that the residents from the remaining apartments also be relocated. That was accomplished on Monday, October 25, 2004, bringing the total of evacuated apartment units to 53.

Following the residential air monitoring activities, EPA continued to coordinate with RIDEM, which provided oversight to the New England Gas Company's response. Work included further assessment of outlying elements including schools, school buses, personal vehicles, and any family members or friends who might have been at any of the apartments. Responders also coordinated with a number of human services organizations to house, feed, and clothe the relocated individuals and to appropriately deal with their ancillary needs.

## **B. RRT MEETINGS**

SPRING: The spring RRT I meeting, held May 11-12, 2004 in Natick, MA, was a joint RRT Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) meeting. The meeting included a DNC planning discussion, National Response Plan/National Incident Management System (NRP/NIMS) update, ICS 402 training for executives and briefs from the Civil Air Patrol and National Weather Service.

FALL: The Fall RRT I meeting, held October 27-28, 2004 in Portsmouth, NH, was scheduled in conjunction with the New Hampshire/Maine (NH/ME) Area Committee's 8<sup>th</sup> annual Oil Spill Seminar. The meeting was originally scheduled to be a joint RRT/RISC meeting, but FEMA had to cancel the RISC portion due to the hurricane season response. The meeting included agency after action reports on the Democratic National Convention, an NRP/NIMS implementation update from a USCG HQ representative and three response reports: M/V STELLAMARE, M/V RIO PUELO, and the Buckeye Pipeline spill.

## **C. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

SELECTION GUIDE WORKGROUP: The Selection Guide Work Group was established in Fall 2004 to develop a Volume II of the Oil Spill Response Technologies Selection Guide for Region 1. A work plan will be presented to the RRT by spring of 2005.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT CONSULTATION WORKGROUP: The Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation Work Group, developed in 2002, completed the B-120 Buzzards Bay spill consultation earlier this year. The Work Group will resume regular meetings on December

16, 2004 to continue discussions related to ESA assessments for response actions.

BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT WORKGROUP: The Boundary Realignment Workgroup is soliciting a representative from each state and MSO to participate in redefining the EPA/USCG jurisdictional response boundaries.

## **II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING**

### **A. TRAINING**

ICS 402: ICS 402, training for executives, was held on May 11, 2004, at the spring RRT I meeting. The training, given by the Coast Guard's Atlantic Strike Team, was designed to give an overview of the roles and responsibilities in the ICS response structure.

### **B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS**

TOPOFF 3: Federal, state and local agencies, as well as the private sector have been actively participating in the planning for the Connecticut venue of the Top Officials (TOPOFF) 3 (T3) exercise. T3 is a multi-level, interagency full-scale exercise (FSE) sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). T3 is the focal point of the National Homeland Security Exercise Program. This exercise will focus on homeland security decision-making at the senior officials level and will include participation down to the local agency level. Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) is the DHS program lead. The United Kingdom (UK) and Canada are expected to participate in the T3 FSE. T3 will be linked with USNORTHCOM Exercise Ardent Sentry 05. TOPOFF 3 will occur April 4-10, 2005. Planners have maintained a bi-weekly meeting schedule for the CT venue.

8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NORTHEAST REGIONAL OIL SPILL SEMINAR: Sponsored by EPA, NOAA, and the New Hampshire & Maine Area Committee, the focus of the October 25-26, 2004 seminar was the Selection Guide for Oil Spill Response Technologies, a tool for identifying alternative response techniques when conventional measures (e.g., booming, skimming, etc.) would pose additional harm to the environment. Coastal and Inland In-Situ Burning and Surface Washing Agents were also discussed.

Steve Lehmann at NOAA is the point of contact for a Selection Guide workgroup that will address the following items: educating RRT members on Selection Guide content, incorporating the Selection Guide as a response tool for Region I OSCs, and developing a Region I-specific Volume II of the Selection Guide.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE: Andrew Raddant from the Department of the Interior (DOI) coordinated an RRT session at the September 2004 Northeast Tribal Environmental Conference in Maine. EPA OSC Alex Sherrin gave presentations on ICS implementation and environmental hazards, specifically pollutant fate and transport. Contact Melanie Morash at EPA for copies of the presentations.

### **C. FEDERAL, STATE, and LOCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION EFFORTS**

JOINT RESPONSE TEAM: The Cross-border CANUSLANT 2005 exercise is to be conducted from June 13-16, 2005 in Bar Harbor, Maine at the College of the Atlantic. The Atlantic Geographic Annex was signed at the October 19-21 Joint Response Team (JRT) meeting and will focus on the issue of places of refuge for vessels in distress.

LONG ISLAND SOUND AREA CONTINGENCY PLAN: Members of the Long Island Sound Area Committee (AC) are currently working on updating their Area Contingency Plan (ACP).

UNANNOUNCED DRILL PROGRAM: The EPA is actively conducting their unannounced drill program for oil/hazmat facilities. EPA OSCs continue to conduct Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures/Facility Response Plan (SPCC/FRP) inspections at EPA's FRP bulk oil storage facilities and will coordinate with USCG for facilities located in the Coastal Zone.

REGIONAL INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE: A quarterly RISC meeting was held on December 8, 2004 at the Federal Regional Operations Center (ROC) in Maynard, Massachusetts. Discussions focused on the FY '04 hurricane responses: states prepared for one hurricane response were unprepared for multiple, consequent hurricanes. Surge staffing was a challenge, and a need was identified for reserve crews to have prior training. The next RISC meeting will be during the week of March 7, 2005.

### **III. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

#### **A. COORDINATOR CHANGES DURING THE SUMMER OF 2004**

1. USCG Coordinator LTJG Barry Breslin replaced LT Rebecca Drew
2. EPA Coordinator Ms. Melanie Morash replaced Ms. Dorrie Paar.

#### **B. USCG COTP/FOSC CHANGES DURING THE SUMMER OF 2004:**

1. USCG MSO Portland, ME: CAPT Stephen Garrity replaced CAPT Mark O'Malley.
2. USCG Sector Boston, MA: CAPT James McDonald replaced CAPT Brian Salerno.
3. USCG Group/MSO Long Island Sound: CAPT Peter Boynton replaced CAPT Joseph Coccia.

### **IV. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION:**

**A.** At the RRT I Fall 2004 meeting, the need for a common interagency response technology to provide a common operating protocol was identified during a presentation on the use of Web EOC during the DNC. Under the NRP, agencies will respond using the principles of NIMS. While there are common paper tools used under NIMS, a common communications management technology has yet to be identified. This issue should be addressed at the national level.

**B.** Another issue requiring NRT attention is the status of the USCG Strike Teams as Special Forces under the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), specifically the agencies Strike Teams are tasked to support. Under the NCP, Strike Teams provide support to EPA and USCG OSCs. However, with the creation of DHS and the move of

the USCG into DHS, the USCG Strike Teams are now viewed as DHS/USCG resources available for various other missions, and tasked directly by DHS and other agencies. This was an operational issue during the DNC where certain groups (e.g., the Civil Support Team, Boston Fire Department, and US Secret Service) interacted directly with the Strike Team outside of the established NCP process.

**V. FUTURE PLANS.**

**NEXT RRT I MEETING:** The next Region I meeting is planned to be a joint RRT I and II meeting in the spring of 2005. Location and date are still to be determined.

**CONCURRENCE:**

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

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