

REGION I REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Period of Report: January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008

Mr. Mike Faulkner
National Response Team
USEPA Headquarters
OEM/ MC 5104A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Faulkner:

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, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. MAJOR/NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Gas Ship CATALUNYA SPIRIT Response: On February 12, 2008, the liquefied natural gas (LNG) ship CATALUNYA SPIRIT, carrying over 31,000,000 gallons of cargo and 700,000 gallons of bunker oil, suffered an engineering casualty off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Without steam to power their propulsion plant or main generators, the vessel drifted in heavy seas toward Cultivator Shoals of Georges Bank, in risk of running aground and threatening to discharge fuel oil and potentially a cargo release.

Coast Guard Sector Boston established a Unified Command and served as the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC). The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection was the State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC), and Teekay Corporation the Responsible Party (RP). The RP activated their Vessel Response Plan (VRP) with the O'Brien's Group serving as the Qualified Individual (QI) and spill management team. The RP was represented by two Senior Company Officials in the command post. The RP contracted Marine Spill Response Corporation (MSRC), which enacted their response plans and fully integrated into the incident management structure. First Coast Guard District and Coast Guard Sector Southeast New England were actively engaged in the initial response actions and supported the Unified Command throughout. Members of RRT I and the two potentially affected Area Committees were informed and the Plymouth to Salisbury Massachusetts Area Contingency Plan (ACP) was activated.

Response efforts were successful and responders gained positive control and arrested the drift of the vessel. A safe haven was subsequently identified and the

vessel was towed to that location. An investigation was conducted to determine the root cause and the vessel was repaired and returned to service.

Commercial Fishing Vessel BLUE SEA Aground: On May 19, 2008, the Commercial Fishing Vessel (CFV) BLUE SEA, a 63 ft fiberglass hull vessel, ran hard aground on rocky bottom immediately adjacent to Coast Guard Station Point Judith, Rhode Island with 3,000 gal of diesel fuel aboard. Coast Guard Sector Southeastern New England established a unified command with the State of Rhode Island and the vessel owner's insurance representative. The Oil Spill Response Organization (OSRO) Clean Harbors responded to the scene with a boom truck to attempt removal of the 3,000 gal of diesel fuel aboard. Clean Harbors rigged 200 ft of vacuum hose to pump fuel from the vessel to the shore and was able to recover 100 gal of the fuel on board. Members of the USCG Atlantic Strike Team were activated and responded to the scene to supervise the fuel pumping evolution. Coast Guard Cutter Willow was directed to stand by with their Spilled Oil Recovery System gear ready on deck.

Throughout the weeklong response the vessel's condition deteriorated due to pounding waves, continuing to break apart. A local salvage company was hired to recover the vessel by the owner's insurance representative. The salvage company was successful in removing the vessel and fuel tanks. Contract crews recovered vessel debris that washed ashore.

Merrimack High School Mercury Release: On August 24, 2008, EPA Region I responded to a release of mercury at the Merrimack High School in Merrimack, New Hampshire, which occurred when a janitorial crew cleaning the nurse's office accidentally broke a blood pressure cuff containing mercury, subsequently spreading the contamination throughout the school as the crew attempted to clean up the visible mercury with a dry mop. At the request of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), EPA conducted air monitoring for mercury vapors within the school building to verify that the cleanup, performed by the school's contractor, had been conducted satisfactorily and that the school was safe for re-occupancy.

Stern-Leach Cyanide Release: On September 8, 2008, EPA Region I responded to release of cyanide at the Stern-Leach company, a jewelry manufacturer in Attleboro, Massachusetts, which occurred when hydrogen peroxide was improperly mixed with a sodium cyanide solution, resulting in an explosion and release of solid hydrogen cyanide. Eleven (11) employees were injured as a result of the explosion, one seriously, and media interest was high. EPA conducted Level B hot zone entries to monitor for cyanide gas, confirming that no cyanide gas was present in the building and that the structure was safe for re-occupancy.

B. RRT MEETINGS

Spring: On March 18, 2008, RRT I convened in Hyannis, Massachusetts. The meeting topics included the following:

- EPA's response to an anthrax release in Danbury, Connecticut
- USCG's response to the sinking of the commercial vessel LADY OF GRACE
- Response to COSCO BUSAN oil spill in San Francisco Bay
- Gas Ship CATALUNA SPIRIT incident
- Recent developments in the National Response Team's (NRT's) Science and Technology Committee
- USCG's Enhanced Mobile Incident Command Post
- Verizon lessons learned from 9/11
- Hurricane Katrina
- Recent flooding in New Hampshire

Fall: On September 24, 2008, RRT I convened in Portland, Maine. The meeting topics included the following:

- Annual two-day seminar on September 22 and 23, 2008 on cold weather spill response, sponsored by the Maine/New Hampshire Area Committee.
- Discussions on maritime transportation system recovery
- RRT activation due to a terrorism-related environmental release
- Volunteer management
- BioWatch
- Local Oil Spill Response Organization (OSRO) capabilities
- Alternative countermeasures for oil spill response
- EPA's drinking water program (including Water and Wastewater Response Assistance Networks, the Water Response Team, and a recently developed Law Enforcement Security Workbook)
- EPA's Homeland Security Summit.

C. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES

No updates to report at this time.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A. TRAINING

Incident Command System:

First Coast Guard District continues to expand its Incident Command System (ICS) training initiative. ICS-210, 300 and 400 training sessions were conducted district-wide for all senior personnel, middle managers, Single Resource Leaders and type 5 and type 4 Incident Commanders. Seats were made available to port partners, other federal agencies, and state and local government responders.

EPA Region I has made a significant commitment to Incident Command System (ICS) training for personnel. As a result, the Regional Administrator and Deputy Regional Administrator have developed a strategy for educating, maintaining and enhancing our regionally trained employees through a series of: on-line trainings, classroom trainings and/or table-top or full-scale exercise opportunities.

- Currently, the region is committed to having at least 6 people trained in each of the Incident Management Team (IMT) Key Leadership Positions (KLPs).
- *All* EPA New England employees have successfully completed IS 100 and IS 200 on-line FEMA training.
- 203 EPA New England employees have successfully completed ICS 300/400 classroom training (approximately 33% of the entire region).
- 57 EPA New England employees are IMT trained in one or more KLPs.
- The Region has developed a Response Support Corps (RSC) to assist response personnel during emergencies, and to date has 145 RSC volunteers.
- The Region has also developed two specialized "mission-essential" teams: a nine-person Debris Management Team, and a twenty eight-person Water Team. Both teams are trained in ICS and will be able to deploy and/or provide technical assistance during either Emergency Support Function (ESF) #10 or ESF #3 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Mission Assignments.
- In November 2008, the region conducted four 1-day full-scale IMT exercise deployments that followed Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) protocols. The exercise focused on providing practical experience for those IMT-trained personnel who had never before experienced large-scale deployments and/or emergency response. This yearly IMT drill exercised over 80 EPA New England employees and contractors and 3 Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Public Health Officers.

EPA OSC Training: EPA OSCs continued to participate in a variety of training this past year, including Facility Response Plan (FRP) and Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) training and Level A hazardous materials response training at the Department of Fire Services Academy in Stowe, Massachusetts and at the Gillette facility in South Boston, Massachusetts. Level A training goals included conducting hazard assessments, practicing decontamination procedures, achieving proficiency in operation of monitoring and sample collection equipment, and improving dexterity and maneuverability in Level A suits.

B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS

Canada:

- CANUSEAST: On September 10-12, 2008, the second CANUSEAST exercise, VANCEBORO 2008, was held in Vanceboro, Maine, adjacent to the Province of New Brunswick. Due to the remote location, the major objective of this exercise was to field test communications equipment and coordination with the participants' emergency operations centers. Other objectives included notifications, plan activations, operational information dissemination from a remote border location, and updates to the CANUEAST Annex.

Exercise participants included the following agencies: EPA, Environment Canada, US Border Patrol, New Brunswick Environment, Maine DEP, Washington County EMA, New Brunswick Fire Marshal, and New Brunswick Southern Railway. Participants successfully demonstrated that, even in a remote area, response information could be transmitted to all of the agencies' headquarters. The next CANUEAST exercise will be in 2010 and will be hosted by Environment Canada.

- Canada/U.S. Joint Response Team (JRT) Atlantic: On November 5-6, 2008, the Canadian / U.S. Joint Response Team for the Atlantic Region (CANUSLANT) held their annual meeting St. John, New Brunswick, Canada. The JRT meets annually to maintain strong working relationships, exchange information, and develop policies between the United States and Canada for preparedness and response in contiguous waters of interest to spills of harmful substances.

Work group sessions were held to jointly work on sections of the CANUSLANT joint response plan addressing communications, command and control systems, and science and environmental support. Other issues discussed at the JRT meeting included: the importance of political outreach in a cross-border response to ensure a joint approach by key representatives and stakeholders to a single cross-border spill event; the significant industry growth in the energy sector in the maritime transportation system of Saint John, New Brunswick; discussion of plans and preparation efforts for the CANUSLANT 2009 biannual exercise to exercise the Joint Marine Pollution Contingency Plan; and revision plans for the Atlantic Geographic Annex (the operational supplement to the binational Joint Marine Pollution Contingency Plan).

National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP):

- On June 3-5, 2008, a USCG Sector Long Island Sound industry-led PREP exercise was held in New Haven, CT. The exercise tested the area and industry spill management teams, deployment of adequate equipment for the

exercise scenario, the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and selected industry response plans, the response management system identified in the ACP and to the extent possible, the unified command within the appropriate participants.

- On June 17-19, 2008, a USCG Sector Northern New England industry-led PREP exercise was held. The exercise focused on implementation of the Area Contingency Plan and selected Industry response plans, standing up a Unified Command and exercising the Incident Command System, exercising the Area Spill Management team and Piscataqua River Coop, deployment of adequate response equipment for a Tier 1 exercise worst case scenario, and validation of notification procedures between the On-Scene Coordinator (OSC), local/state agencies and industry stakeholders that will be impacted in the event of an oil spill.
- On September 10-11, 2008, a USCG Sector Southeastern New England industry-led PREP exercise was held in Fall River, MA. The exercise tested the implementation of ICS and contingency plans, the deployment and operation of response equipment, the development of media strategy and public notifications, the validation of GRPs for Buzzards Bay, the establishment of an MTSR unit, and the Vessel Movement Reporting System procedures for Buzzards Bay.
- On October 26-28, 2008, a USCG Sector Boston industry-led PREP exercise was held in Boston, MA. The scenario involved a report of 20,000 gal of #2 oil being discovered in the vicinity of the McArdle Bridge. The exercise focused on implementation of the ACP, activation of an ICS structure, deployment of oil spill response equipment, and coordination between industry, local, state and federal trustees and stakeholders.
- USCG Sectors Northern New England, Boston, Southeastern New England and Sector Long Island Sound each conducted four PREP Quarterly Notification drills. The Sectors exercised and tested communications between OSCs and key elements of the Unified Command IAW and their applicable ACPs. The notification drills worked to ensure that the key elements of the commands knew who to call in the event of a discharge within their area; communication modes tested included telephone, radio, message-pager, or facsimile.

Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS) and Spilled Oil Recovery System (SORS) Equipment Deployment Exercise:

- On April 7-8, 2008, the First Coast Guard District conducted a VOSS Equipment deployment exercise in Rockland, ME. The exercise focused on testing and training ship's crew on the deployment of VOSS equipment, inspecting and validating proper operation of all VOSS equipment and employing various strategies for effective use of VOSS equipment.

- On August 6-8, 2008, the First Coast Guard District conducted a SORS Equipment deployment exercise in Narragansett Bay-Rhode Island. The deployment tested and trained crew of CGC JUNIPER, Sector Southeastern New England and Sector Boston on the deployment and use of equipment, employing various strategies for effective use of all equipment and inspecting and verify proper equipment operation.

12th Annual Maine and New Hampshire Area Committee Oil Spill Seminar: This year's seminar was sponsored by the Maine/New Hampshire Area Committee, Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP), New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), EPA, USCG, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The focus of the September 22-23, 2008 seminar in Portland, Maine was on oil spill response in cold weather. Presentations, case studies and discussions focused on the Gulf of Maine winter marine environment; characteristics of snow and ice; cold weather operational considerations; strategies and tactics for winter spills on land and on solid/broken ice; prevention and treatment of cold-weather injuries; Alaska spill responses; and recent developments in oil and ice flow research.

C. FEDERAL, STATE, and LOCAL PLANNING/COORDINATION EFFORTS

Area Contingency Plan Updates: Coastal Area Contingency Plans are updated on a triennial basis one year following the triennial Preparedness for Response Exercise Program Area Exercise. As a result, the four Coastal ACPs are currently being updated for submission to the First Coast Guard District between April and October 2009.

D. MAJOR BEST PRACTICES FROM RESPONSES, TRAININGS, EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS AND OTHER RRT ACTIVITIES

TOPIC TITLE : Area Committee/Regional Response Team topic and guest speaker sharing	
To increase the draw and interest of Regional and Area meetings, topics presented at the Regional level are reviewed by Area Committee coordinators for suitability as guest speakers at Area Committee meetings. Mutual report-outs on recent Area and Regional meetings are included on meeting agendas, emphasizing the connectivity of the National Response System across the Area-Regional-National levels. This connectivity can be further strengthened by increasing breadth of input on topics for NRT attention and best practices.	
Sponsor: Scott Lundgren	Phone: 617-223-8434
POC: Scott Lundgren	E-mail: Scott.R.Lundgren@uscg.mil
Web link: n/a	
Keywords: National Response System, Area Committees, Guest Speakers	

III. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Coast Guard:

- NEW FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT COMMANDER: Rear Admiral Dale Gabel assumed the duty of Commander, First Coast Guard District and Commander, Maritime Defense Command One in July 2008. He oversees all Coast Guard missions across eight states in the Northeast and 2000 miles of coastline from the US-Canada border to northern New Jersey.
- New USCG RRT I and II Co-Chair: CAPT Mark Landry retired from the Coast Guard in April 2008 and CAPT Craig Gilbert assumed the role of RRT Co-Chair for Region I and II.

EPA:

- EPA RRT I Coordinator: EPA RRT I Coordinator Melanie Morash is transferring to Region 9 in mid-February. Ms. Morash's replacement has yet to be determined.

IV. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION

NORTHCOM WMD Team and NRS: In October 2008, NORTHCOM certified the operational capability of a 4,700 person Chemical, Biological, Nuclear or Radiation Consequence Management Response Task Force built around the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division. This is the first of three such new teams. The interface of this new capability with the civil response is not known. Articles have noted that the team could also assist with chemical releases during non-terrorism/non-WMD disasters. This new task force was raised by the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) at the September 2008 RRT I meeting, but limited information prevented in-depth discussion of interface during an incident. Request the NRT assist in clarifying the continuing role for the NRS/ESF-10 in WMD incidents relative to new capabilities being created.

Funding for State Participation: The national financial crisis has had significant impacts on state budgets, limiting their ability to participate in exercises and training events. States have been challenged to obtain funding and approval for out-of-state travel, and this situation is likely to worsen with further state budget cuts. Some multi-state Area Committees are beginning to see these constraints impact state participation even at the smaller area level. While not a new issue, or one easily solved by the NRT, it appears likely to grow in importance and may require means for remote participation in Regional Response Team (RRT) and Area Committee (AC) meetings.

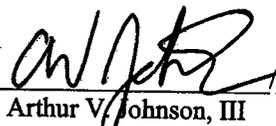
Anthrax Clean-up Levels: As a result of the EPA's response to a release of anthrax in Danbury, Connecticut in September 2007, EPA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have initiated discussions to evaluate if there is an acceptable exposure level of naturally occurring anthrax. Making this determination is important because, at present, the clean-up goal for any EPA anthrax response is "no growth" after culturing. To attain this "no growth" goal the response will have to include fumigation, a difficult strategy to implement. Request NRT assistance in cross-agency discussions regarding appropriate anthrax clean-up levels.

Bleach Studies of Anthrax Clean-up: Another result of EPA's Danbury anthrax response is that EPA's Office of Research and Development (OARD) and the National Laboratories are evaluating multi-phase cleaning/bleaching options which will result in "no growth" cultures. These evaluations were initiated due to the successful cleaning (via bleach solution) of an impacted wooden shed at the Danbury site. Request NRT assistance in monitoring and sharing these developments across the RRTs.

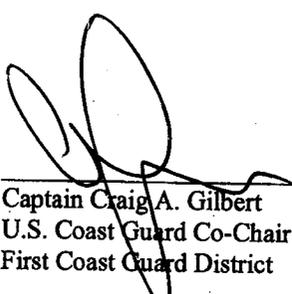
V. **FUTURE PLANS**

Next RRT I Meeting: The spring Region I meeting is scheduled for Wednesday – Thursday, March 18-19, 2008 in Mystic, Connecticut.

VI. **CONCURRENCE**


Mr. Arthur V. Johnson, III
EPA Co-Chair
U.S. EPA, Region I

12/22/08
(Date)


Captain Craig A. Gilbert
U.S. Coast Guard Co-Chair
First Coast Guard District

12/22/08
(Date)