Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	**2**	**Calendar Year:**	**2021**
EPA RRT Co-Chair:	**Doug Kodama**	**Email:**	**kodama.doug@epa.gov**
USCG RRT Co-Chair:	**Joseph Boudrow**	**Email:**	**Joseph.A.Boudrow@uscg.mil**
EPA RRT Coordinator:	**Steve Touw**	**Email:**	**Touw.Steve@epa.gov**
USCG RRT Coordinator:	**CDR Jesse Diaz**	**Email:**	**Jesse.m.Diaz@uscg.mil**

A. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.	2 Jun 2021	Virtual	88 (approx.)	www.nrt.org/RRT2June2021
2.	11 Jan 2022	Virtual (postponed from 12/21)	116 (approx.)	www.nrt.org/RRT2January2022

B. Activations / Notifications – NO RRT ACTIVATIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS REPORT

1.	**Dates:**	4/4 – 5/24	**Event:**	White Plains Mercury Site; White Plains, NY	**ACT**		**NOT**	x
	Issue / Concern:	On April 4, 2021, an elemental mercury spill occurred when a resident attempted to give an antique grandfather clock to another nearby resident. As they moved the clock, the pendulum bob - an unsealed canister filled with elemental mercury - tipped over inside the clock housing, and an unknown quantity of mercury spilled. The two residents up righted the canister and attempted to gather the elemental mercury. They placed the canister in another plastic container and transported it to the second residence. The plastic container also breached, spilling mercury in the passenger van as well as in the single attached garage. The residents called the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) on 4/6. WCDOH requested the residents take no further actions. WCDOH dispatched inspectors to each residence to conduct mercury vapor assessments, and observed elevated readings at both residences. WCDOH contacted New York State Department of Health who in turn notified EPA.						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH), New York State Department of Health						
	Decisions Made:	On 4/7, 2021, EPA and its START contractor conducted an assessment at the two impacted residences. Mercury vapor readings ranged between 1.700 to 23.560 µg/m3 at the first address. The observed readings at the second address ranged between 1.221 and in excess of 50.000µg/m3 (the maximum rated detection limit of the instrument). The recommended mercury vapor concentration for residential occupancy is less than 1 µg/m3. On 4/8, EPA Region 2's SEMD Director granted verbal authorization and mitigation activities were initiated. Upon learning the two sets of residents had relocated to a neighbor's and friend's residence, taking with them some personal items, EPA made arrangements to meet the residents and test the personal items they took with them. On 4/9, EPA, START and the ERRS contractor arrived at the scene. The personal items taken from the first address ranged between 5.3 to 11.9 µg/m3 and as high 54.1 µg/m3 from the second address. In consultation with EPA Region 2's relocation coordinator, EPA relocated the residents to a nearby hotel and provided Meals & Incidental Expenses at the rate specified in the Federal Travel Regulations. Due to the clothing being contaminated, a stipend was also given to purchase clothing for a week. On 4/12, EPA, START and ERRS mobilized to the site to begin the physical removal of elemental mercury. A team was assigned to each house. The team at the second address cleaned the passenger van that transported the cannister of elemental mercury and EPA returned the van to the resident. The crew then began vacuuming visible elemental mercury inside the garage, the spill location at this address. Once visible mercury was vacuumed, the garage was sealed, heated and ventilated. At the first address, the crew wrapped the grandfather clock in several layers of poly sheeting to minimize the mercury vapors from further						

		contaminating the ambient indoor air. The crew began vacuuming the visible mercury beads in the clock room and the adjacent half bath, and continued following the trail of beads along the staircase leading to the second floor as well as in the bedroom. On 4/20, 24-hr heating and simultaneous ventilating of the two residences was initiated and continued until 4/25, at which time the heat and negative air machines were turned off. On 4/26, the crew began addressing hotspots in both residences. Mitigation efforts involved a combination of vacuuming, applying a mercury detergent and a mercury amalgam powder. On 4/29, after addressing the hotspots, the heat in each residence was elevated for 24 hours and then allowed cool. On 4/30, WCDOH in conjunction with EPA selected sampling locations, and confirmation air sampling following NIOSH 6009 protocol was conducted at the first residence. On 5/3, EPA received the laboratory results; all samples were below 1 µg/m3. On 5/3, confirmation air sampling was conducted at the second residence and lab results were received on 5/4. All but two samples were less than 1µg/m3. The result for the foyer sample located adjacent to the interior garage door was 1.10 µg/m3; levels in the garage, which is used strictly for storage, was 2.22 µg/m3. The two residences were aerated to remove the residual pungent odor of the mercury detergent. The residents of the first address were allowed to return to their residence on 5/5. The residents of the second address were allowed to return on May 7. On 5/24, the accumulated waste was shipped off-site for disposal and all personnel and equipment were demobilized.

C. RRT Exercises				
1.	**Dates:**	12/15/21	**Event:**	Joint Upper Delaware River Response Exercise; Stroudsburg, PA
	Agencies Involved:	EPA Regions 2 & 3, NPS, DOI, USFWS, NYSDEC Region 3 & Emergency Management, NJDEP, NJOEM, PA DEP, and county emergency services from Orange and Delaware (NY), Warren and Sussex (NJ) and Monroe (PA) counties.		
	Summary of exercise:	A joint exercise developed by EPA Regions 2 & 3 and the National Park Service was held in a hybrid in-person/virtual format from the Monroe County (PA) Emergency Operations Center in Stroudsburg, PA. The scenario involved a train derailment spilling Bakken crude oil in Sparrow Bush, NY, impacting the Delaware River and shoreline in NY, NJ and PA. The exercise was conducted as a tabletop discussion among participating agencies to address initial notification and communication, environmental response and public safety, operational coordination and response structure, and public information and warning. In addition to EPA Regions 2 & 3, exercise participants included DOI, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NYSDEC Region 3, NYSDEC Emergency Management, NJDEP, NJ OEM, PA DEP, and county emergency services from Orange and Delaware (NY), Warren and Sussex (NJ) and Monroe (PA) counties. This exercise was the first of a series of planning and preparedness activities which are anticipated to take place in 2022, including a tactical tabletop exercise; the development of pre-planned tactical response plans/strategies (GRPs) in selected areas/segments of the Upper Delaware; and a full scale deployment exercise designed to further coordinate multi-jurisdictional response in the area and to validate the response strategies. The resulting activity will be used to update/revise the applicable area contingency plans and the NPS Upper Delaware River Spill Response Plan.		

D. Changes in RRT Leadership		
Agency	**Outgoing Personnel**	**Incoming personnel**
1) EPA Co-Chair		Doug Kodama
2) EPA Alternate Co-Chair		Shawna Hoppe

E. Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the RRT (which may help other RRTs)

- Maintaining virtual hosting capacity for RRT meetings to ensure high attendance from Federal, State and Local agencies, industry representatives, and NGO's.

- Calculating WCD volumes for offshore Wind Energy areas is done by identifying the largest volume that is closest to land.

F. Federal, State, and Local Planning and Coordination Efforts

- **Marine Debris**: On-going marine debris planning for New York and New Jersey continues with federal and state partners, led by NOAA's Marine Debris Program.

- **Offshore Energy**: Coordination and partnerships are strengthening as a result of multiple Offshore Renewable Energy Initiatives in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

- **Lake Champlain Contingency Planning:** EPA completed shoreline surveys for response strategy development along the northern portion of Lake Champlain from October 18-22, 2021. The data is currently being used for development of Geographic Response Plans for the northern portion of the lake. The data will be aggregated with south lake strategies for the production of hard copy and Viewer-accessible GRPs for the entire lake.

- **Executive Order 13650 Continued Coordination**: EPA, DHS and OSHA continue to share facility-specific information in accordance with each agency's requirements, policies, and procedures. EPA shares such information on an as-needed basis with federal, state, and local partners. EPA recently referred several cases to OSHA for follow up as the result of EPA's release follow up investigations. EPA is continuing to compare DHS, NJDEP and EPA inventory data on facilities that use and store nitrocellulose in New Jersey to identify potential inspection candidates.

G. Challenges and Issues (and Operational Requirements Which May Require NRT Attention)

- Virtual RRT meetings, although safest during the current pandemic and in alignment with various Agency and organizational restrictions, are straining the personal relationships developed at in-person RRT meetings.