

Annex N - HAZMAT

Purpose

This appendix ensures a coordinated response to a hazardous materials incident and seeks to minimize the effects of a hazardous materials release on people and the environment. It provides guidance for establishing and maintaining information available to the public under SARA Title III, “The Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986” hereafter referred to as EPCRA.

The overall responsible parties in charge of implementing and amending this plan are the municipal fire departments.

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

⁽⁶³⁾Houston County recognizes the need to identify tier 2 facilities and plan for hazardous materials releases. There are major state highways that run through the county in which hazardous materials are transported daily: State Highways 76, 44, 16, and 26. There are also numerous county roads that occasionally see hazardous material traffic: County Roads 3, 249, 18, 2, 4, and 21 to name a few. In addition, there is a railroad that runs through the county on the east side, bordering the Mississippi River.

⁽⁵⁷⁾Facilities within Houston County that possess extremely hazardous materials are required to develop and maintain emergency response plans and procedures consistent with SARA Title III, Section 304 that their employees will follow in the event of a release of those hazardous materials.

At a minimum, these facilities are required by law to immediately notify the following in event of an accidental emergency release, and be prepared to state the name of the substance(s) released and the approximate amount:

- Houston County Dispatch at 911
- State Duty Officer at 800-422-0798
- National Response Center at 800-424-8802

Houston County has determined that all covered facilities within the jurisdiction have a written spill response plan or have knowledge of how to respond during a spill or other chemical emergency. All facilities in Houston County have 24-hour emergency phone numbers as well as secondary numbers and contacts.

⁽⁶⁴⁾There are also numerous facilities within Houston County that may cause additional risk due to their proximity to facilities and the materials they possess. These can include gas stations, hardware stores, and more. A map of these facilities and reporting facilities can be found on the [ArcGIS Collector map](#) (access through Houston County Emergency Management).

⁽⁶⁵⁾Houston County has many facilities which can be deemed as vulnerable during a hazardous materials incident. These include schools, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and more. A map of these facilities can be found on the [ArcGIS Collector map](#) (access through Houston County Emergency Management).

In addition, the county needs to know how to alert the public to a release and how to communicate to the public the best response method. Currently CodeRED and IPAWS are the planned alerting methods. Evacuation and sheltering in place should be exercised regularly to ensure smooth response during an actual release.

Situation and Assumptions

SITUATION

- Hazardous material spill incidents can occur anywhere at any time throughout Houston County. The Houston County Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis addresses the potential for hazardous materials releases within the County, and is located in Appendix 1 of the basic plan.
- Alarm activation, sight, sound, and smell are all examples of identifying hazardous material releases. Accidental releases can occur in stationary facilities and in mobile transportation due to a number of different causes.
- Emergency response to a hazardous materials incident may require multi-disciplinary response. Responders may include fire services, law enforcement, environmental containment and cleanup specialists, fish and wildlife experts, emergency medical services, environmental health, and other agencies.
- Upon initial assessment, some incidents may not have obvious impacts on life, property, or the environment. Despite no obvious signs, however, they may have subtle long-term consequences for human health and the environment.
- Hazardous material incidents have some different characteristics based on the type of material being released and how the release can affect the public. A few examples include:
 - The major threat presented by oil spills is damage to the environment including plant and animal health. These spills can happen on both land and water.
 - The major threat presented by average hazardous chemicals is to public health and safety, as well as damage to the environment.
- Every incident will be different depending on the material involved, the size/quantity of the release, the location of the spill, and other factors such as season and time of day. Most designated 302 facilities in Houston County have limited if any emergency response equipment and will most likely rely on responder services.
- Specialized HAZMAT teams are available to be requested through the Minnesota Duty Officer.

ASSUMPTIONS

- A hazardous material release or spill may develop slowly or occur suddenly without warning.
- Actual or threatened releases of hazardous materials often require immediate response by a number of agencies.

- Properly trained and equipped local emergency responders can handle most hazardous material incidents.
- Implementing prevention programs can reduce the number and severity of hazardous materials incidents.
- Coordination of responding agencies is critical to minimizing casualties and the successful recapture of spilled materials and subsequent cleanup.
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) will be used in all Houston County HAZMAT incidents from start to finish, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS

Hazardous materials by OSHA's definition include any substance or chemical which is a "health hazard" or "physical hazard," including chemicals which are carcinogens; toxic agents; irritants; corrosives; sensitizers; agents which act on the hematopoietic system; agents which damage the lungs, skin, eyes, or mucous membranes; chemicals which are combustible, explosive, flammable, oxidizers, pyrophoric, unstable-reactive, or water-reactive; and chemicals which in the course of normal handling, use, or storage may produce or release dusts, gases, fumes, vapors, mists or smoke which may have any of the previously mentioned characteristics.

EPA incorporates the OSHA definition, and adds any item or chemical which can cause harm to people, plants, or animals when released by spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, emptying, discharging, injecting, escaping, leaching, dumping, or disposing into the environment. These chemicals are used in industry, agriculture, medicine, research and consumer goods throughout Houston County.

A hazardous material spill or release can pose a risk to life, health and property. An incident can force the evacuation of a few people, a section of a facility or an entire neighborhood or community, resulting in significant economic impact and possible property damage. Spilled material can be costly to clean up and may render the area of the spill unusable for an extended period of time. Hazardous materials incidents are generally unintentional, and associated with transportation accidents or accidents at fixed facilities. However, hazardous materials can be released as a criminal or terrorist act.

⁽⁶⁹⁾Methods for determining areas or populations affected can be determined by using the mapping system on the eplan website. In addition, Houston County, upon discovery of a release, will contact the National Weather Service La Crosse to assist in plume modeling. These models can provide responders with accurate information regarding locations, areas and potential populations affected by a release or spill of a hazardous material.

⁽⁶⁸⁾Within Houston County:

- Most 302 facilities rely upon visual or other sensory observations by employees to determine the occurrence of a release.
- A couple facilities use an electronic sensor monitoring system to detect releases.

- The facility emergency coordinators or designees at each 302 facility determine if an emergency exists
- Local and state emergency response numbers, as well as the National Response Center, will be called by the 302 facility emergency coordinator or designee immediately upon determination that an emergency exists.

Preparedness

Before a hazardous materials release, each local business and municipality will:

- Inventory hazardous materials and maintain MSDS sheets in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Develop a local hazardous material response plan to minimize impact of normal operations, on people, and on the environment. A copy of these plans should be provided to the Houston County Emergency Management Director.
- Develop and implement a public information system to prepare the local population to deal with a hazardous material incident. This awareness campaign should:
 - Help the community understand the local hazards.
 - Encourage community members to post the number for the Minnesota Poison Control Center by your telephones.
 - Encourage community members to purchase multipurpose (Class ABC) fire extinguishers for your home and vehicles, and review operating instructions. Check them once a month, and have them recharged if they lose pressure.
 - Learn to recognize the U.S. Department of Transportation placards (diamond-shaped signs) on the sides of trucks, vans and trains that identify the hazardous materials they are transporting.

Response

⁽⁷⁰⁾Some of the facilities within Houston County have their own equipment to handle releases. Due to the mainly agricultural economy of the county, other businesses or farmers may have additional equipment and resources to offer during a release requiring a response. Available resources to Houston County is located in the Resource Manual.

⁽⁷¹⁾Of the eleven covered Section 302 facilities within Houston County, five have specialized tools, equipment or trained employees to respond to an accidental release of a hazardous material on site during normal working hours. In most cases, public safety response agencies cannot rely on the specialized tools and equipment being immediately available to them in the event of an off hours hazardous materials incident on site. The hazardous material emergency response plans for each of these covered Section 302 facilities contain more detailed information and are available for review by contacting the Houston County Emergency Management Director.

In general, various company policies, insurance and legal considerations make it impractical to acquire immediately from these facilities specialized tools and equipment for use at an offsite hazardous materials incident, unless there is a direct relationship between the hazardous

materials release and one of the covered facilities (i.e., an inbound or outbound shipment). (67) Houston County fire departments have conducted some hazmat training, but because they are manned by volunteers they are unable to maintain the specialized training needed to effectively and safely deal with extremely hazardous materials. They have mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments who have more experience and training.

In many cases, a specialized Hazardous Material Response Team will be called in to provide technical assistance, highly trained responders, and equipment. The Minnesota Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team Program consists of ten Chemical Assessment Teams and four Emergency Response Teams under contract with the Department of Public Safety. The teams are strategically located throughout the state to provide an immediate response to hazardous materials emergencies threatening public safety. Chemical Assessment Teams assist local authorities by providing technical assistance, air monitoring and decontamination. Emergency Response Teams provide local authorities with spill mitigation assistance.

The Incident Commander may request a team response by contacting the Minnesota Duty Officer directly or through the Sheriff's Office or the Emergency Management Director/EOC.

The regional teams are authorized to respond when requested under the following conditions:

- There is a release or potential threat to public safety or the environment.
- The release presents an actual or potential threat to public safety or the environment.
- Local emergency response personnel have been dispatched, are on the scene and have made an initial assessment of the scene.
- Local authorities have determined that the response needs of the incident exceed local capabilities.
- Local authorities have requested a team response.
- The EPCRA Programmer of Public Safety considers the response to be necessary to protect life, property and the environment.
- The request is to provide technical assistance in support of a bomb squad response or law enforcement agency response to a clandestine drug lab.

The training levels required to deal with a hazardous material incident is as follows:

Cold Zone - First Responder Awareness.

Warm Zone - First Responder Operations, or training specific to the task to be performed, i.e. decontamination.

Hot Zone - Technician or training specific to the task to be performed.

Do not request assistance from mutual aid agencies which exceed their levels of training/response capability. Local authorities are responsible for providing only properly trained personnel to provide support services to team operations.

Gundersen Health Hospital in La Crosse has decontamination capabilities for chemical, biological, and radiological materials.

Recovery

The party responsible for the hazardous material is responsible for cleaning up after a release. Local authorities may need to make a determination of culpability if it is not readily evident. This clean up should be coordinated and paid for by the responsible party as soon as possible if further public or environment safety concerns exist. If the responsible party is not known and there is an imminent public safety or environmental threat, the local government should coordinate the cleanup and document the cost. This cost will then be billed to the responsible party if they are identified at a later date.

ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

First Responders will:

- Provide a limited initial response to hazardous materials incidents based on responder training and expertise
- Notify dispatch, the Minnesota Duty Officer, and/or the National Response Center when the magnitude of the incident exceeds the expertise of the initial responders
- Isolate the area according to the DOT Guide Book, Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders (WISER <http://wiser.nlm.nih.gov/>) or other appropriate resource information
- Identify hazardous material without compromising safety (placard number, shipping documents, driver comments, etc.)
- Provide for the safety of the public using whatever actions are necessary (evacuation, shelter-in-place). See annex E for further details on evacuations
- Support incoming HAZMAT teams with personnel, equipment, and other assistance as required

Incident Commander will:

- Immediately gain and maintain strict control of the scene
- Identify product through placards, shipping papers, or other methods
- Estimate potential course and harm and identify if the first responders have the resources and training to deal with the incident
- Establish a perimeter around the potentially affected area and initiate evacuations if necessary
- Ensure that the appropriate personnel including the Minnesota Duty Officer, dispatch, County Commissioners and other local officials are notified as necessary
- Request additional assistance as appropriate through dispatch or the EOC

Hazardous Materials Response Teams will:

- Respond in support of first responder agencies when requested
- Assess actions taken by on-scene units
- Provide a technical level response to hazardous materials incidents
- Provide incident management expertise and equipment

- Establish exclusionary zones
- Determine the proper level of personal protective equipment, emergency medical treatment, decontamination techniques, and additional authorities requiring notification
- Perform duties as directed by the Incident Commander
- Coordinate with EOC when responding and as needed

Hazardous Materials Response Teams can't:

- Assume overall command of the hazardous materials emergency
- Clean up, transport or dispose of the material unless in coordination with the responsible party

[Address explosives](#)

Liability/ Workers Compensation: During authorized operations, members of a regional hazardous materials response team operating outside their geographic jurisdiction are employees of the state.

Response Costs:

- The Responsible Party is Liable for Reasonable & Necessary costs of response (MN Statute 299A.52)
- There is no cost to requesting a response, unless the jurisdiction requesting a response is the responsible party
- The state team bills state - the state recovers costs from the responsible party
- The state is not permitted to cover local costs. Local Recovery MN Statutes 299A.52 and 115B.04 Provide Authority

The Hazardous Material Response Teams may need support from local emergency services including:

- Personnel (including 6-8 trained in decontamination training)
- Fire Suppression/Foam
- Incident Command
- Public Protection
- EMS/ALS Transport
- Air/Water Supply
- Other Equipment

Emergency Management Director will:

- Notify local, state, and federal authorities as requested by the Incident Commander or as appropriate to the situation
- Activate the County EOC when necessary
- Support the Incident Commander on scene as requested
- Provide resource coordination as requested

ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

ADMINISTRATION

Any hazardous material release must be reported to the Minnesota Duty Officer at 1-800-422-0798.

LOGISTICS

The Logistics Officer appointed by the Incident Commander will be responsible for supporting all first responders including any hazardous material response teams.

Plan Development and Maintenance

The Houston County Emergency Management Director is responsible for updating this appendix according to the schedule developed as listed in the basic plan.

This appendix will be exercised at least every 4 years in accordance with the training and exercise schedule developed by the Emergency Management Director. Individual first responder departments should provide training to their personnel in identification and response to hazardous material releases at least every two years.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

49 CFR Parts 100-185

[U.S. Department of Transportation - HazMat Safety](#)

[2004 Emergency Response Guidebook](#) (2.8 M PDF)

29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.1200

[FEMA: Hazardous Materials](#)

[U.S. Department of Transportation - HazMat Safety](#)

[2004 Emergency Response Guidebook](#) (2.8 M PDF)

A guidebook for First Responders during the initial phase of a dangerous goods/hazardous materials incident

[Material Safety Data Sheet \(MSDS\) Online Search](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) - Environmental Emergencies](#)

[Extremely Hazardous Substances \(EHS\) Profiles & First Aid Guide](#)

National Response Center - oil and chemical spill reporting