

Emergency Response Program Roles and Responsibilities

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Reggie Cheatham, Director



Emergency Response Program Overview

- *EPA Mission: "...to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment..."*
- EPA's emergency response program was established in 1972
- EPA responds to releases of hazardous substances or oil discharges from any type of site
- EPA works under FEMA's lead on declared disasters





Emergency Response Program Authorities

- National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP)
- Clean Water Act (CWA)
- Oil Pollution Act (OPA)
- Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) - Superfund
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)
- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act)
- National Response Framework (NRF)
- Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD) (now PPDs)



EPA's Relationship with States

- The National Response Center (NRC) receives over 30,000 calls a year, many of which EPA responds to in conjunction with its state and local partners as necessary.
- States, as well as local governments, communities, and tribes, are critical to the success of responses.
- EPA provides support when requested or when state and local first responder capabilities have been exceeded.
- Continuous communication and consistency with data regarding states is necessary for effective emergency management (centralization, State EOCs, Data Management Plans)
- One of the goals of the Environmental Response Laboratory Network is to provide the response community with surge capacity.



FEMA and EPA

- EPA may also support responses led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Stafford Act or led by other Federal agencies, such as the Dept. of Health and Human Services, under the NRF.
- At times, EPA uses Mission Assignments (MAs) that it receives from FEMA to provide assistance and resources to states, as well as local governments and tribes.
- EPA is in the top three for mission-assigned agencies (\$350 million since 2017)
- Examples of EPA support can include: oil/hazmat spill response using the Agency's NCP assets; assessment of damage to drinking water and wastewater treatment infrastructure; issuance of waivers of EPA Clean Air Act fuel requirements; and technical support for decontamination strategies.



When We Respond

Wide Range of Emergency Scenarios



Routine oil discharge or hazardous substance release



Catastrophic natural disaster
large oil discharges and hazmat incidents



Terrorism incident



Major national security event



How We Respond

- Decentralized operations based in the 10 regional offices
- Approximately 230 EPA On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) with experience and delegated authority to manage incidents
- Comprehensive program infrastructure
 - Intra-agency
 - Inter-agency (FEMA, DOE, HHS, etc.)
 - Contracted
 - Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START)
 - Emergency and Rapid Response Services (ERRS)
- Extensive working and planning relationships with local, state and federal responders
- 24/7 scientific and engineering support and state-of-the-art technology
- Over 2,000 EPA volunteers in the Response Support Corps, including HQ and Regional offices





EPA Special Teams

- Environmental Response Team (ERT)
- Radiation Emergency Response Team (RERT)
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Consequence Management Advisory Team (CMAT)
- National Criminal Enforcement Response Team (NCERT)





Emergency Operations Centers (EOC)

- The EOC is EPA's hub for situational awareness, coordination, and communication during incidents.
- The EOC provides 24-hour support for environmental emergencies.
- On-duty Watch Officers support the Regional Response Centers, On-Scene Coordinators and our federal partners.
- EPA has an EOC at Headquarters, as well as one in each region.





Recent Responses

– 2017

- Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria
- California Wildfires

– 2018

- Hurricanes Florence and Michael
- Super Typhoon Yutu
- Kilauea Volcanic Eruption
- California Wildfires (Camp and Woolsey)

– 2019

- Midwest Floods
- Hurricane Dorian



Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria

- **Overview:** During the 2017 Hurricane Season, EPA responded to 3 major Hurricanes impacting EPA Regions 2, 4 and 6.
- **EPA Role:** EPA led and supported multiple response efforts in TX, FL, and the Caribbean, including:
 - Assessing more than 4,800 drinking water systems, 246 Superfund sites, and over 1,500 regulated facilities.
 - recovering more than 391,000 containers (drums, oil containers, propane tanks).
 - deploying dozens of Community Involvement Coordinators to work with local governments on waste management in the Caribbean.





The 2018 California Wildfires

- **Overview:** In November, 2018 the Camp and Woolsey Fires significantly impacted California, displacing tens of thousands of people, burning more than 100,000 acres, and resulting in more than 80 deaths.
- **EPA Role:** FEMA issued Mission Assignments to EPA for rapid needs assessment, the collection of household hazardous waste (HHW), and removal of asbestos material.
- EPA removed and disposed of HHW from nearly 15,000 properties.





Kilauea Volcanic Eruption

- **Overview:** Kilauea Volcano in Puna, HI erupted on May 3, 2018 causing the release of lava from the lower East Rift Zone. Approximately 2,800 people were evacuated and more than 650 structures were destroyed.
- **EPA Role:** EPA maintained its monitoring network on Hawaii Island; provided public information support to state and county agencies; provided VIPER training and support to HDOH for the transition of air monitoring equipment, and staffed the Emergency Support Function #10 desk at the State EOC in Honolulu. EPA coordinated with the state on transitioning the air monitoring activities from EPA to the State of Hawaii.



Typhoon Yutu

- **Overview:** On October 25, 2018, Super Typhoon Yutu (ST Yutu) passed over the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) as a Category 5 typhoon, causing significant damage to Saipan and Tinian. ST Yutu was the strongest storm ever to impact US soil, with sustained winds of 180 mph; the eye of the storm passed directly over Tinian, which is home to about 3,000 people.
- **EPA Role:** FEMA issued mission assignments to the EPA for activation, assessment, collection, and disposal of household hazardous waste (HHW); and subject matter expert (SME) support to the CNMI government for restoration of drinking water and wastewater services. EPA deployed several OSCs and water SMEs to Saipan and Tinian. In addition, contractor resources were deployed for assistance.



Midwest Floods

- **Overview:** Extensive flooding occurred in the midwestern United States mostly along the Missouri River in March 2019.
- **EPA Role:**
 - EPA supported states with hazardous material releases, oil discharges, and drinking water/wastewater impacts due to the extreme flooding events occurring in the Midwest.
 - Initial assistance focused on drinking water/wastewater treatment impacts and planning for orphan container/household hazardous waste assessment, collection, and disposal options.
 - Region 7 (Kansas) used unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to quickly assess the emergency situation.



Hurricanes Florence and Michael

- **Overview:** Hurricanes Florence and Michael impacted many southeastern and mid-Atlantic states in September and October 2018.

- **EPA Role:** Some examples of EPA's support during Florence and Michael:
 - Assessed 2,727 drinking water systems
 - Completed initial assessments for 120 Superfund sites
 - Completed 231 RMP field assessments
 - Completed 89 FRP field assessments
 - Assessed 374 disaster debris management sites



Lessons Learned

- Regional Response Teams play an important role in planning, prevention and response activities
- Common operating procedures (e.g., ICS) and policies (e.g., NRF) are needed for inter-operability
- Responses are dynamic and there is a constant need for information, especially for larger incidents (on the 24/7 news cycle)
- Public messaging should be kept consistent across all levels
- Data handling requires a combination of quick collection and dissemination, balanced against the need for quality assurance
- Responses impact people; communicating risks to the public is critical