

NRT-1

Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Guide

March 1987



NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

(Replaces proposed Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Guide dated November 1986)

emergency response and response planning;

- The members of the group must **agree on their purpose and be able to work cooperatively** with one another; and
- The group must be **representative of all elements of the community** with a substantial interest in reducing the risks posed by hazardous materials.

A comprehensive list of potential team members is presented in Exhibit 2.

In those communities receiving FEMA funds, paid staff may already be in place for emergency operations planning and other emergency management tasks. This staff should be an obvious resource for hazardous materials planning. FEMA has two training courses for the person assigned as the planning team leader and for team members -- Introduction to Emergency Management, and Emergency Planning. Another course, Hazardous Materials Contingency Planning, is an inter-agency "train-the-trainer" course presented cooperatively by EPA, FEMA, and other NRT agencies. Course materials and the schedule of offerings are available through State emergency management agencies.

2.2.2 Respect for All Legitimate Interests

While many individuals have a common interest in reducing the risks posed by hazardous materials, their differing economic, political, and social perspectives may cause them to favor different means of promoting safety. For example, people who live near a facility with hazardous materials are likely to be greatly concerned about avoiding any threat to their lives, and are likely to be less intensely concerned about the costs of developing accident prevention and response measures

than some of the other groups involved. Others in the community are likely to be more sensitive to the costs involved, and may be anxious to avoid expenditures for unnecessarily elaborate prevention and response measures. Also, facility managers may be reluctant for proprietary reasons to disclose materials and processes beyond what is required by law.

There may also be differing views among the agencies and organizations with emergency response functions about the roles they should play in case of an incident. The local fire department, police department, emergency management agency, and public health agency are all likely to have some responsibilities in responding to an incident. However, each of these organizations might envision a very different set of responsibilities for their respective agencies for planning or for management on scene.

In organizing the community to address the problems associated with hazardous materials, it is important to bear in mind that **all affected parties have a legitimate interest in the choices among planning alternatives.** Therefore, strong efforts should be made to ensure that all groups with an interest in the planning process are included.

Some interest groups in the community have well-defined political identities and representation, but others may not. Government agencies, private industry, environmental groups, and trade unions at the facilities are all likely to have ready institutional access to an emergency planning process. Nearby residents, however, may lack an effective vehicle for institutional representation. Organizations that may be available to represent the residents' interests include neighborhood associations, church organizations, and *ad hoc* organizations formed especially to deal with the risks posed by the presence of specific hazardous materials in a neighborhood.

Exhibit 2
POTENTIAL MEMBERS OF AN EMERGENCY PLANNING TEAM

Part A: Experience shows that the following individuals, groups, and agencies should participate in order for a successful plan to be developed:

- *Mayor/city manager (or representative)
- *County executive (or representative)/board of supervisors
- *State elected officials (or representative)
- *Fire department (paid and volunteer)
- *Police department
- *Emergency management or civil defense agency
- *Environmental agency (e.g., air and/or water pollution control agency)
- *Health department
- *Hospitals, emergency medical service, veterinarians, medical community
- *Transportation agency (e.g., DOT, port authority, transit authority, bus company, truck or rail companies)
- *Industry (e.g., chemical and transportation)
- Coast Guard/EPA representative (e.g., agency response program personnel)
- Technical experts (e.g., chemist, engineer)
- *Community group representative
- *Public information representative (e.g., local radio, TV, press)

Part B: Other groups/agencies that can be included in the planning process, depending on the community's individual priorities:

- Agriculture agency
- Indian tribes within or adjacent to the affected jurisdiction
- Public works (e.g., waste disposal, water, sanitation, and roads)
- Planning department
- Other agencies (e.g., welfare, parks, and utilities)
- Municipal/county legal counsel
- Workers in local facilities
- Labor union representatives (e.g., chemical and transportation, industrial health units)
- Local business community
- Representatives from volunteer organizations (e.g., Red Cross)
- Public interest and citizens groups, environmental organizations, and representatives of affected neighborhoods
- Schools or school districts
- Key representatives from bordering cities and counties
- State representatives (Governor, legislator's office, State agencies)
- Federal agency representatives (e.g., FEMA, DOT/RSPA, ATSDR, OSHA)

*Required by Title III of SARA

2.2.3 Special Importance of Local Governments

For several reasons, local governments have a critical role to play in the development of emergency preparedness. First, local governments bear major responsibilities for protecting public health and safety; local police and fire departments, for example, often have the lead responsibility for the initial response to incidents involving hazardous materials. Second, one of the functions of local government is to mediate and resolve the sometimes competing ideas of different interest groups. Third, local governments have the resources to gather necessary planning data. Finally, local governments generally have the legislative authority to raise funds for equipment and personnel required for emergency response. Support from the executive and legislative branches is essential to successful planning. Appropriate government leaders must give adequate authority to those responsible for emergency planning.

2.2.4 Local Industry Involvement

Because fixed facility owners and operators are concerned about public health and safety in the event of an accidental release of a hazardous material, and because many facility employees have technical expertise that will be helpful to the planning team, the team should include one or more facility representatives. Title

III of SARA requires facility owners or operators to notify the emergency planning committee of a facility representative who will participate in the emergency planning process as a facility emergency coordinator. In planning districts that include several fixed facilities, one or more representative facility emergency coordinators could be active members of the planning team. The planning team could consult with the other facility emergency coordinators and/or assign them to task forces or committees (see Section 2.3.2). Title III of SARA also requires facilities to submit to the local emergency planning committee any information needed to develop the plan.

2.2.5 Size of Planning Team

For the planning team to function effectively, its size should be limited to a workable number. In communities with many interested parties, it will be necessary to select from among them carefully so as to ensure fair and comprehensive representation. Some individuals may feel left out of the planning process. This can be offset by providing these individuals access to the process through the various approaches noted in the following sections, such as membership on a task force or advisory council. In addition, all interested parties should have an opportunity for input during the review process.

2.3 Organizing the Planning Process

After the planning team members have been identified, a team leader must be chosen and procedures for managing the planning process must be established.

2.3.1 Selecting a Team Leader

A community initiating a hazardous materials emergency planning process may choose to appoint an individual to facilitate and lead the effort, or may appoint a planning team and have the group decide who

will lead the effort. Either approach can be used. It is essential to establish clear responsibility and authority for the project. The chief executive (or whoever initiates the process) should determine which course is better suited to local circumstances. (The emergency planning committee required by Title III of SARA is to select its own chairperson). Regardless of how the team leader is selected, it is his or her primary responsibility to over-

see the team's efforts through the entire planning process. Because the role of leader is so significant, a co-chair or back-up could also be named.

Five factors are of major importance in selecting a team leader:

- The degree of respect held for the person by groups with an interest in hazardous materials;
- Availability of time and resources;
- The person's history of working relationships with concerned community agencies and organizations;
- The person's management and communication skills; and
- The person's existing responsibilities related to emergency planning, prevention, and response.

Logical sources for a team leader include:

- The chief executive or other elected official.** Leadership by a mayor, city or county council member, or other senior official is likely to contribute substantially to public confidence, encourage commitment of time and resources by other key parties, and expedite the implementation of program initiatives. Discontinuity in the planning process can result, however, if an elected official leaves office.
- A public safety department.** In most communities, the fire department or police department bears principal responsibility for responding to incidents involving chemical releases and, typically, for inspecting facilities as well. A public safety department, therefore, may have personnel with past experience in emergency planning and present knowledge of existing responsibilities within the community.

- The emergency management or civil defense agency.** In many communities, officials of such an agency will be knowledgeable and experienced in planning for major disasters from a variety of causes. One of the primary responsibilities of a community's emergency management coordinator is to guide, direct, and participate in the development of a multi-hazard emergency operations plan. In some States, existing laws require that this agency be the lead agency to prepare and distribute emergency plans.
- The local environmental agency or public health agency.** Persons with expertise and legal responsibility in these areas will have special knowledge about the risks posed by hazardous materials.
- A planning agency.** Officials in a planning agency will be familiar with the general planning process and with the activities and resources of the community.
- Others.** Communities should be creative and consider other possible sources for a team leader, such as civic groups, industry, academic institutions, volunteer organizations, and agencies not mentioned above. Experience in leading groups and committees, regardless of their purpose, will prove useful in emergency planning.

Personal considerations as well as institutional ones should be weighed in selecting a team leader. For example, a particular organization may appear to have all the right resources for addressing hazardous materials incidents. But if the person in charge of that organization does not interact well with other local officials, it might be best to look for a different leader.