

Chapter 8

Hazardous Materials Preparedness

I. GENERAL

This outline of response resources is specific to a hazardous materials (hazmat) event. More information is in your LEOP or contact the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Coordinator.

Chemical disasters may go beyond environmental (air, land, and water) and jurisdictional boundaries (county or municipal lines), so it is imperative that all levels of government responsible for health and safety cooperate in preparing for potential disasters.

II. ORGANIZATION

A. County Government

The Nebraska Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (NEPCRA) Title 67, NAC Chapter 81, requires each county to have a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). LEPCs must assess hazardous sites in the communities and developing a plan to mitigate any identified issues. The information becomes part of the LEOP, Annex F.

B. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

Each LEPC is responsible for participating in the review and development of the LEOP to ensure that all hazmat considerations are included, as regulated by the Nebraska Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (NEPCRA), R.R.S. 81-15, 191 to 81-15, 235. NEMA, through the SERC Coordinator, provides technical and administrative assistance to help the counties and their LEPCs accomplish these tasks.

Under NEPCRA, LEPC membership shall include, at a minimum, a representative from each of the following interest groups:

1. State and Local Elected Officials
2. Public Health
3. Local Environmental Protection
4. Hospitals
5. Firefighters
6. Local Emergency Management

7. Law Enforcement
8. Transportation
9. Broadcast and Print Media
10. Neighborhood and Community Organizations
11. Owners and Operators of Facilities covered by NEPCRA

LEPCs are required to meet and submit an activity report to the SERC on an annual basis.

C. County Emergency Management Agency

Each county in Nebraska maintains an emergency management program. Typically, during a hazardous material incident, its responsibilities are to maintain the county Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and provide support to the Incident Command.

To prepare for a hazardous material incident, the emergency manager develops and maintains the LEOP. The emergency manager also ensures that county personnel involved in the plan are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

D. Local Fire Department

If a hazardous material incident poses the threat of fire or explosion, the fire department may respond up to the level of their certification. In addition, firefighters may help with search and rescue operations within the capabilities of their hazmat certification. The fire department is responsible for assuring that first responders receive sufficient direction to:

1. handle the situation properly,
2. coordinate with local law enforcement to define the hazard area,
3. initiate notification of support agencies/hospitals that receive potentially contaminated patients, and
4. request the assistance of a State Emergency Response Team (SERT) through the Nebraska State Patrol, or call upon mutual aid agreements if necessary.

E. Law Enforcement

When a hazardous material incident occurs, local and county law enforcement may assist with the incident, depending upon the missions assigned and their level of certification. When evacuation is necessary, law

enforcement officials assist with evacuation under the guidance of the Incident Commander. Law Enforcement takes the action necessary to control traffic, crowds and provide security at the scene and the evacuated area.

Local law enforcement maintains authority and security within their jurisdiction. If the incident becomes severe or appears to be terrorism related, the responding law enforcement agency may request the assistance of other local, State, and Federal Law Enforcement agencies.

F. Local Health Department

Local health departments that have personnel with hazmat training are responsible for safeguarding the local public against health problems related to a hazardous materials incident. If the incident presents the potential for spreading disease, the local health department will mitigate the effects of the identified pathogen or irritant by distributing medical or protective supplies, vaccines, or other preventatives as indicated by the situation. The local health department will also coordinate efforts with state and local authorities to enact directed health measures (i.e. quarantine, isolation, social distancing) and recommend appropriate sanitary or environmental measures.

Emergency workers and/or victims may be mentally traumatized by an incident. The health department may assist emergency management in recognizing the need for behavioral health resources and assist in accessing these services. Critical Incident Stress Management counseling is also available through the nearest NSP Office.

The local health department will assure that the public receives health-related information and recommendations appropriate for the hazardous materials incident.

G. American Red Cross (ARC)

The county is responsible to provide short-term sheltering of victims until the American Red Cross unit supporting the county can assist. The roles and responsibilities of both organizations are defined in the current county LEOP.

III. State Government

A. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

As the lead State Agency, NEMA reviews and provides guidance to the counties in the required updates and revisions to the county LEOP to include;

1. reporting/documenting an extremely hazardous materials stored in identified facilities,
2. identifying points of contact

3. identifying vulnerable environmental areas
4. identifying populations at risk if there is a release, and
5. listing the Community-Right-to Know facilities and contacts.

To help organizations administer their emergency plans, NEMA provides training to planners, first responders, and other emergency personnel under the provisions of 29 CFR 1910.120. NEMA and the SERC Coordinator serve as the administrator of the SERC.

Report all hazardous spills/releases to the SERC; use the process outlined in the LEOP.

When a serious hazardous material incident occurs, NEMA is prepared to assist local authorities. If a hazardous materials team is needed to assist a local response, proper procedures are set and must be followed. See LEOP, Annex F, Appendix 1.

NEMA also maintains, calibrates, repairs, lends and provides training on radiation survey instruments. These instruments are used to detect radioactive materials and are made available to State and local organizations (law, fire, health departments, EMAs).

B. Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ)

NDEQ is involved in both emergency preparedness and response to hazardous materials incidents. To ensure Nebraska communities have adequate information regarding hazardous chemicals, DEQ coordinates the Community Right-to Know and receives all reports submitted to the SERC.

NDEQ is responsible for receiving emergency release notifications required by both Federal (i.e., CERCLA and EPCRA) and State (Title 126-Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Management of Wastes) laws. A NDEQ representative is on 24-hour call seven days a week. Should a local agency or a member of the public wish to report a release, although it is the duty of the responsible party, the representative can be contacted at (402) 471-2186 during working hours and (402) 471-4545 (State Patrol Dispatch) after-hours, weekends, and holidays.

Waste materials (e.g., chemicals, response equipment, contaminated soils and water) are often generated during an emergency incident. Contact the DEQ Waste Management Section (WMS) for guidance on whether the materials can be disposed in a landfill as a special waste, shipped to a hazardous waste facility, or recycled. The WMS can provide guidance on any required site response or clean-up reports.

C. Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) – Carrier Enforcement Division

When a hazardous material incident occurs, NSP provides radiological monitoring and helps NDEQ and the NEMA to establish evacuation routes and secure the area. The Carrier Enforcement Division also provides assistance to help contain the spill and establish/maintain roadblocks.

D. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

DHHS, Public Health, provides guidance and regulatory oversight for peacetime nuclear incidents at licensed facilities for possession, use, transportation, and disposal of radioactive material. Once notified of an incident involving radioactive materials, DHHS is responsible for conducting a health hazard assessment and controlling/advising all safety, containment, decontamination, and cleanup activities. See LEOP Annexes F, G.

E. Nebraska State Fire Marshal (SFM)

During a hazardous material incident, the SFM may assist in the determination of hazardous materials spill or leak control, chemical reactions, and incident mitigation. The Fire Marshal may assist by coordinating local fire departments' efforts and providing personnel to investigate the incident. SFM is also responsible for inspections; review, regulation, and enforcement of codes for storage tanks, mobile transports, bulk facilities, user(s) of explosives and blasting agents, fireworks, motor vehicles, and transport of hazardous materials.

F. Nebraska National Guard

The Nebraska National Guard can assist in hazardous materials incidents in a multitude of ways. The National Guard's primary responsibilities include security, maintenance and assistance with search and rescue operations. Guardsmen may augment law enforcement resources, provide transportation, communication services, and explore the area by air.

G. Nebraska National Guard – 72nd Civil Support Team (CST)

In a severe hazardous material incident, a request for assistance from the Nebraska National Guard – CST should be made through NEMA. The 72nd Civil Support Team (CST) and CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) are two National Guard organizations which have hazmat/WMD missions and are further explained below. In addition to those organizations the National Guard can also provide augmentation to law enforcement, transportation, communications, and aerial assessments during hazmat incidents and other emergencies. The 72nd CST supports civil authorities at domestic Chemical Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) incident sites by identifying CBRN agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with appropriate requests for additional support. The 72nd CST is organized into six sections, which include: Command, Operations, Administration and

Logistics, Communications, Survey and Decontamination, and Medical and Analytical Section. Each section has its own unique capabilities. 72nd CST is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week for rapid recall/rapid deployment for WMD terrorism response operations in the United States. The 72nd CST advanced echelon will be en route to the incident within 90 minutes of notification. The rest of the team will follow up within 3 hours of notification.

H. Nebraska National Guard – CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP)

The CERFP is designed to respond to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High Yield Explosive (CBRNE) incident or other catastrophic event and assist local, state, and federal agencies in conducting consequence management by providing capabilities to conduct mass casualty decontamination, emergency medical services, and casualty search and extraction. The CERFP is made up of approximately 200 soldiers and airmen in five (5) elements: Decontamination, Search & Extraction, Medical, Fatality Search and Recovery Team (FSRT), and Command & Control (C2). It can be deployed as an entire task force or each element can be deployed individually. The CERFP is designed to be deployable within 6 hours of notification.

I. Hazmat Teams

NEMA has signed ten (10) inter-local agreements for hazmat response with fire departments across Nebraska. The 10 teams are located in; Scottsbluff, North Platte, Red Willow, Grand Island, Hastings, Beatrice, Columbus, Norfolk, Omaha and Bellevue. The teams consist of members of local fire departments that have received technician level training in hazmat response, Incident Command and other specialized training. If a local jurisdiction, fire department or agency requests one of these teams, the requesting agency is responsible for all costs incurred. If the request is made through the Emergency manager and NEMA, and if warranted, the costs may be defrayed through the Governor's Emergency Fund.

J. Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team (NHIT)

If a local response agency is overwhelmed, they can request assistance from a State Emergency Response Team (SERT). The NHIT, a specialized SERT, has members from the NSP, NSFPM and NDEQ. Members are trained to a minimum of technician level. To activate the NHIT team call the Nebraska State Patrol dispatch.

K. Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)

If needed, NDOT would assist in the closing of State roads and assessing alternate routes.

L. Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA)

The NDA regulates fertilizers, agricultural chemicals and is responsible for ensuring the safe use of pesticides. When a hazardous material incident involves bulk fertilizer, anhydrous ammonia, or a bulk agricultural chemical, NDA uses its laboratory facilities to analyze, test, and provide information about those substances. If necessary, NDA may control the use of milk and food in the area.

IV. Federal Government

A. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may be asked by the State to provide technical assistance and advice. The EPA is equipped to survey the incident for environmental problems, provide laboratory services for tests and analyses, and participate in remediation activities. The EPA can also provide resources and technical assistance through the Regional Response Team (RRT), Radiological Emergency Response Team (RERT), and the RadNet monitoring system.

B. National Response Center (NRC)

The National Response Center streamlines the Federal response by providing a single, continuously staffed location that receives and refers for action and/or investigation, all reports of environmental, etiological and biological incidents throughout the United States. By calling toll free, 1-800-424-8802, any person may satisfy the Federal reporting requirements for the following incidents: an oil spill; a hazardous chemical release; a pipeline accident; a transportation accident involving hazardous material or an oil release of radioactive material; or a release of etiological or hazardous biological material.

C. Department of Energy (DOE)

Either State officials or the NRC can request monitoring assistance of and help with the removal and disposal of radioactive discharges. If personnel from the State and DOE cannot handle the incident, DOE may activate the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center (FRMAC), Aerial Measuring System (AMS), Accident Response Group (ARG), National Atmospheric Release Advisory Center (NARAC), Radiation Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site (REAC/TS), and Radiological Assistance Program (RAP) teams. Direct your questions to NEMA, Technical Hazards Unit.

D. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

If a hazardous materials incident causes massive injury and uninsured damage, a Presidential Declaration may be issued. If this occurs, the FEMA is the lead agency to administer the Federal Disaster Assistance Program. FEMA coordinates with other Federal, State, and local agencies to provide disaster relief assistance, technical assistance, and remediation activities.

V. Hazardous Materials Training

All new responders will be trained before assisting in a hazardous materials incident.

NEMA recognizes National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards of training, for more information on specific competencies refer to the NFPA. Training for hazardous materials response is in accordance with the following levels:

A. First Responder Awareness Level

First responders at the awareness level are individuals who are likely to witness or discover a hazardous substance release. An emergency response is then initiated by notifying the proper authorities of the release. No further action is taken beyond notification.

B. First Responder Operations Level

First responders at the operations level are individuals who respond to releases or potential releases of hazardous substances, as part of the initial response to the site for the purpose of protecting nearby persons, property, or the environment from the effects of the release. They are trained to respond in a defensive fashion without actually trying to stop the release. Their function is to keep it from spreading and prevent exposures. First responders at the operational level will have received at least twenty four (24) hours of operations level training.

C. Hazardous Materials Technician (Offensive Actions)

Hazardous materials technicians are individuals who respond to releases, or potential releases, for stopping the release. They assume a more aggressive role than a first responder at the operations level in that they will approach the point of release in order to plug, patch or otherwise stop the release of a hazardous substance. In Nebraska, Hazardous materials technicians must have successfully completed first responder operations level training before receiving Technician Level Certification.

D. Hazardous Materials Specialist (Offensive Actions)

Hazardous materials specialists are individuals who respond with and provide support to hazardous materials technicians. Their duties parallel those of the hazardous materials technicians, however, these duties require a more directed or specific knowledge of the various substances they may need to contain. The hazardous materials specialist would also act as the site liaison with Federal, State, local, and other government authorities in regard to their skills in site-specific activities.