



Preparedness Initiatives in Crude by Rail Transport

Federal Resources to Support Crude by Rail Preparedness Initiatives

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Preparedness Initiatives for Crude by Rail Incidents

ISSUE

Domestic rail shipments of crude oil grew from 9,500 train car loads in 2008 to 435,560 loads in 2013—an increase of nearly 4,500 percent. The growth in shipment volume has increased the threat of spills, explosions, and other effects associated with a train derailment or crash. Recent incidents in Lac Mégantic, Quebec, Lynchburg, Virginia, Mount Carbon, West Virginia, and Galena, Illinois demonstrate the consequences of crude by rail incidents on surrounding communities and natural environments.

PURPOSE

This document identifies Federal resources available to help the whole community prepare for crude by rail transportation incidents. The document summarizes key observations on crude by rail preparedness from discussions with states, information on upcoming exercise series, federally supported training options, and additional crude by rail response resources from Federal agencies. Additionally, this document identifies preparedness resources for state, local, tribal, and territorial personnel to obtain training and exercise support for crude by rail incidents.

COORDINATION WITH STATES

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Department of Transportation (DOT) (together, the interagency team) held discussions with states to collect information on existing preparedness efforts for responding to and mitigating the impacts of crude by rail incidents. The interagency team conducted conference calls with the 48 states in the lower continental United States and the District of Columbia. State participants included directors and deputies from state emergency management and homeland security agencies, environmental agencies, transportation agencies, state fusion centers, and local police and fire departments.

Four key observations emerged from the interagency team's discussions with the states on crude by rail preparedness:

- 1. State Planning:** States have taken steps to prepare for crude oil incidents, but do not consider the threat from crude oil to be more significant than other hazardous materials.
- 2. Training Deficit:** States reported crude by rail training shortfalls and requested additional in-state training options for first responders.
- 3. Exercises:** States believe their exercise programs are preparing first responders for a crude by rail incident, but welcome additional federally sponsored exercises involving crude by rail scenarios.
- 4. DOT Emergency Order:** States believe the May 2014 DOT Emergency Order reporting threshold of one million gallons of Bakken crude oil per train is too high and does not help in their ability to identify and prepare at-risk communities.

Based on these coordination and outreach efforts with states, the interagency team has identified a range of Federal resources to help the whole community prepare for crude by rail transportation incidents.

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FEDERAL RESOURCES

The following subsections catalogue federally supported incident planning and response information, exercises, and training courses that aim to enhance preparedness across the whole community for crude by rail transportation incidents. Each resource includes additional information for further inquiry.

Planning, Preparedness, and Response Resources

The Federal Government provides leadership and support in oil spill preparedness under a multi-level, multi-agency National Response System established under the Clean Water Act as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. An EPA-chaired and Coast Guard-vice-chaired 15-member agency National Response Team guides the National Response System. Thirteen [Regional Response Teams](#) (RRTs) provide regional support and coordination with states. RRTs also play an active role in planning and preparedness for crude by rail incidents through the development of [Area Contingency Plans](#) and Geographic Response Plans. Jurisdictions can call upon RRTs for support during an incident. The National Response System provides a Federal On-Scene Coordinator who integrates into an incident response using the Incident Command System/Unified Command.

Planned Exercise Series

FEMA is developing an exercise series for state, local, and tribal stakeholders that will test first responder capability during crude by rail incidents.

- **FEMA National Exercise Program’s *Operation Safe Delivery Series*:** A series of three workshops will support community preparedness and resilience by examining and validating capabilities necessary to reduce risk, mitigate potential consequences, and ensure capacity to respond to and recover from transportation incidents involving crude oil. The three workshops will take place in urban (Jersey City, New Jersey), rural (LaCrosse, Wisconsin), and tribal (Blackfoot Nation, Montana) jurisdictions to test the exercise toolkit for scalability before delivery to the states in fall 2015.

Exercise inquiries: FEMA’s National Exercise Division (NED@fema.dhs.gov)

Existing Training Opportunities

The interagency group compiled a catalogue of federally funded training courses related to crude by rail transportation incidents available to state, local, tribal, and territorial first responders. Table 1 details federally funded training courses.

Table 1: Federally funded crude by rail training courses

Existing Training Opportunities		
Federal Agency	Training Organization	Description
DOT	Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Hazardous Materials Safety Assistance Team (HMSAT)	HMSAT conducts workshops across the country to help the regulated industry and emergency responders understand and comply with the Hazardous Materials Regulations. HMSAT also provides training on the Emergency Response

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		<p><i>Guidebook</i> and information on DOT regulatory and emergency response initiatives.</p> <p>For more information: http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/outreach-training/seminars-and-workshops</p>
DOT	PHMSA	<p>PHMSA is currently developing the Transportation Rail Incident Preparedness & Response (TRIPR) information modules to offer a flexible approach to train first responders and emergency personnel on best practices for pre-incident planning and response to rail incidents involving flammable liquids such as petroleum crude oil and ethanol. The training modules are currently under development and are expected to be available on the PHMSA website in May 2015.</p> <p>For more information: http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/outreach-training</p>
EPA	The Training Exchange Website (TRAINEX)	<p>EPA provides a range of aggregated training information—including training course descriptions, schedules, and registration links for classroom and internet-based courses—to internal stakeholders; other Federal agencies; and state, local, and tribal hazardous waste management personnel through the TRAINEX website.</p> <p>For more information: http://www.trainex.org/</p>
FEMA	Transportation Technology Center Incorporated (TTCI)	<p>TTCI, as a member of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC), offers numerous hazardous materials and rail incident technician and specialist courses, as well as a new program, Crude by Rail, for local first responders at the Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC) in Pueblo, Colorado. Freight rail carriers also provide funding to assist first responder training at SERTC.</p> <p>For more information: http://sertc.org/</p>
FEMA	Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP)	<p>FEMA CDP offers in-state courses to states with an identified training need for hazardous materials response to crude oil incidents.</p> <p>For more information: https://cdp.dhs.gov/</p>
FEMA	Emergency Management Institute (EMI)	<p>EMI offers a virtual tabletop exercise (VTTX) and integrated emergency management course series, V0031 – VTTX Series – Hazmat Oil, focused on crude oil railway spills.</p>

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		For more information: https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx
FEMA	United States Fire Administration (USFA)	USFA provides incident best practices and informational materials to local firefighters registered to the USFA listserv via infograms and social media. For more information: http://www.usfa.fema.gov/

Additional Resources

The interagency team offers the following additional Federal resources for reference, awareness, and distribution to stakeholders.

- **DOT PHMSA** – [Crude Oil Rail Emergency Response: Lessons Learned Roundtable Report](#)
- **DOT PHMSA** – [Commodity Preparedness and Incident Management Reference Sheet](#)
- **DHS Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis (OCIA)** – Analysis: Pipeline and Rail Incidents (1985 – 2014) (Appendix A)
- **DHS OCIA** – Analysis: Bakken Crude Oil Flows by Rail (Appendix B)
- **EPA** – [Area Contingency Planning Handbook \(March 2013\)](#)
- **The Interagency Board** – Training Trigger: Crude Oil Rail Shipments (Appendix C)
- **National Response Team (NRT)** – [Emerging Risks Responder Awareness Training: Bakken Crude Oil \(2015\) \(webinar recording, slides\)](#)
- **NRT** – [National Response System factsheet](#)
- **NRT** – [National Response Team website](#)
- **RRT** – [Regional Response Teams website](#)
- **National Response Center hotline** for reporting oil spills, chemical releases, or maritime security incidents: 1-800-424-8802

PRIVATE SECTOR RESOURCES

While this document catalogues only federally supported training and exercise resources available to state, local, tribal, and territorial first responders, many private sector stakeholders offer their own training courses and exercises.

