

Emergency Management Assistance Compacts and Mutual Aid Agreements

The Issue: A WIPP transportation incident may occur near state borders or exceed state and local emergency response capabilities. Affected state and local officials must be able to access the closest, available emergency response resources, whether they are in an adjoining state or part of a federal agency.

The Objective: Ensure a swift response by capable responders, regardless of jurisdiction.

The Approach: An emergency management assistance compact or a mutual aid agreement helps ensure the availability of adequate resources and the necessary protocols to call upon those resources to accomplish an efficient and effective response. All western states have entered into some type of emergency management assistance compact and/or mutual aid agreement.

These emergency management assistance compact and/or interstate mutual aid agreements would most likely be used when the incident is in an area near a state border. Assistance may be requested of an adjoining Western state because the adjoining state's available resources may be closer to the incident. A request for assistance may also be made when a neighboring state's or local jurisdiction's own resources are exceeded.

Emergency management assistance compacts and/or interstate mutual aid agreements may be used to supplement existing local-to-local agreements. Many local agencies along state borders already have formal or informal agreements to assist across state lines. Since these responders are more likely to handle the initial response to an incident, a good working relationship at the local level is crucial. Western states encourage the establishment of strong local relationships across state lines.

Evaluation: Existing mutual aid agreements will be reviewed periodically. The lead states will also periodically review the model mutual aid agreement to ensure it accurately reflects current conditions and requirements.

The most effective method of evaluating existing emergency management assistance compacts and mutual aid agreements (state-to-state and state-to-DOE) is through training exercises such as a WIPPTREX. Western states planning WIPPTREX exercises are encouraged to include joint exercises with neighboring states and/or the DOE to evaluate emergency management assistance compact and/or mutual aid agreement processes and procedures. The after-action report for each exercise should include a discussion of the effectiveness of interstate assistance process and procedures, when appropriate.

If an emergency management assistance compact and/or a mutual aid agreement is activated due to a transportation incident, a detailed after action report should be prepared. Lead states will review the after action report to determine if changes in the model agreement are required.