

Training and Exercise Resources

*Prepared by the States of
Colorado, New Mexico and Utah*

May 2004

Introduction

An incident involving a WIPP shipment poses unique problems for emergency response personnel not usually addressed as part of their normal hazardous materials training.

Provide Western public-sector employers with references and resources for radiological training, drills, and exercises. This will ensure that employees designated to respond to WIPP transportation incidents have the competencies appropriate to their assigned level of response. The desired result is to provide a coordinated, timely, and effective response to WIPP transportation incidents. Training and exercising should also build public confidence in the state and DOE programs.

Regulations

The Technical Advisory Group advocates strict compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations as well as other applicable federal, state, local and professional organizations' standards regarding the training of employees assigned to positions requiring handling of hazardous materials, including WIPP TRU-waste transportation incidents. In particular, the Technical Advisory Group recognizes and supports OSHA's policy that it is the employer's responsibility to determine the appropriate level of training required, provide the required training, and certify that the employee demonstrates the competencies following initial training and annual refresher training.

States Training Program

WGA WIPP corridor states have a responsibility to provide guidance and resource information to public-sector employers for WIPP-related transportation emergency response. Each state and local government approaches hazardous materials and radiological training differently based upon organizational regulations and resources. WIPP corridor states support development of a hazardous materials and radiological training system that provides for:

- Assessing training capabilities and vulnerabilities.
- Standardized training course design and development; use of modular formats.
- Integration of radiological training modules into ongoing hazardous materials courses.
- Course evaluation; long-term testing and reevaluation to check effectiveness of training.
- Standardized Instructor and Instructor Trainer Program, certification, monitoring.
- Courses offered in a Train-the-Trainer format to facilitate incorporation of radioactive materials into hazardous materials course curricula. This would allow for localization of information and eliminate possible duplication of subjects such as elementary radioactive information.
- Accelerated training course that focuses on the fundamentals of response to train a larger number of people in a short period of time.

- A long-range training plan at least three years in advance of radiological shipments.

DOE and the states are vital resources to the local jurisdictions in developing and carrying out their training programs.

Training Resources

DOE-CBFO, in consultation with the Western States, developed the States and Tribal Education Program (STEP) emergency responder training courses specifically for WIPP shipments. Current courses include First Responder, First Responder Refresher, Command and Control, Radiological Instrumentation Training for Emergency Responders and Train-the-Trainer. The Technical Advisory Group will continue to provide input on additional course development and the direction of the STEP training program to ensure the needs of the target audiences are addressed. DOE, other federal agencies, and states have developed other radiological training that may benefit emergency response personnel.

DOE is currently developing a modular training course that may at some point in the future fully integrate WIPP STEP training. It is envisioned that in order to satisfy the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act (LWA), this new course entitled *Modular Emergency Radiological Response Transportation Training* (MERRTT) will have to be reviewed by OSHA and concurred with by the states. At that point, MERRTT would be deemed acceptable for use and could be substituted for STEP training.

DOE-CBFO has delivered the majority of STEP training courses since the inception of the program. Some states have state and local personnel deliver the STEP course material, rather than rely on DOE-CBFO. Some states are also interested in incorporating the STEP training into their existing hazardous material response training programs. Since emergency responders are already heavily burdened with training requirements, this would allow for a more efficient use of limited training time.

Exercise Program

Exercises are an integral part of any training program. Exercises can enhance learning, test systems, increase awareness, and provide information to evaluate the effectiveness of training. The exercise process is one in which a community participates in training, organizes public information/education/outreach, and conducts drills, tabletop, functional, and full-scale exercises.

DOE developed an exercise program that provides an opportunity to evaluate state and local capabilities. The WIPP Transportation Emergency Exercise (WIPPTREX) program was designed to determine the state and local response capabilities to a WIPP incident. WIPPTREX exercises are held twice a year on a rotational basis among Western States. Additionally the

State of New Mexico, as the host state for WIPP, conducts two WIPP Transportation Exercise for New Mexico (WIPPTRAX) exercises each year.

Regional Collaboration

The Western States support regional collaboration and information exchange in developing their response training and exercise programs. The Technical Advisory Group established the Training and Exercise Resource Working Group (TERWG) in order to provide a resource pool to member states and participating tribes, related to current training and exercise information, experiences, and techniques.

Changes in regulations, procedures, policies, and other factors may result in different training and exercise requirements for each state. Courses need to be routinely reviewed to ensure they are accurate, current, and appropriate.

Under the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, DOE-CBFO has interpreted that OSHA is required to evaluate the STEP courses. While OSHA agreed to evaluate the STEP training program every two years, their policy specifies that it is the employer's responsibility to certify an employee's training and competency. Lead states will work with DOE and its contractors to evaluate, review, and update the course material prior to submittal to OSHA for review. The evaluation is to include a periodic sampling of course students to assess the usefulness of the training material and the students' retention of the information. Finally, under the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, DOE-CBFO must conduct an assessment of the level of training along the corridors and publish the results in a report periodically.

Each state should continue to evaluate whether it is providing sufficient training and exercise opportunities to its emergency responders. States may wish to set goals to train a certain percentage of state and local emergency responders annually. Each state should also ensure that responders all along their portion of the route have been trained, and eliminate "gaps" where no or few emergency response personnel have received training. States should also continue to evaluate whether responders are receiving refresher training on a regular basis.

States should share any important lessons learned from their individual evaluations with the lead states. A summary of this information will be compiled by the lead states biannually and provided to the other states and DOE.