

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA'S ROLE IN e COUNTER-TERRORISM ACTIVITIESe

FACTSHEET

Incidents involving weapons of mass destruction have resulted in many deaths, numerous serious injuries and massive destruction of property. Examples of such incidents, both at home and abroad, include:

- A bomb exploded in a garage of the World Trade Center in New York City in February 1993; six people were killed, 1,000 injured, and millions of dollars in damages were sustained.
- The highly toxic chemical gas Sarin[®] was intentionally released in the Tokyo, Japan, subway in March 1995; 12 people were killed and thousands were injured, many seriously.
- A bomb exploded in front of a Federal building in Oklahoma City in April 1995; 165 people were killed, many hundreds were injured, and millions of dollars in property losses to the Federal government and local businesses were sustained. 4

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is preparing for and will respond to terrorist threats from weapons of mass destruction. Weapons of mass destruction are "weapons or devices that are intended, or have the capability, to cause death or serious bodily injury to a significant number of people, through the release, dissemination, or impact of toxic poisonous chemicals; disease organisms; or radiation or radioactivity."e Because of its inherent role in protecting human health and the environment from possible harmful effects of certain chemical, biological, and nuclear materials, EPA is actively involved in counter-terrorism planning and response efforts.

"We cannot afford to wait for an incident involving weapons of mass destruction. We cannot afford to be unprepared at any level." f
-- Former U.S. Senator f Sam Nunnf

The U.S. government has responded to the threat from terrorist activities by helping State and local governments prepare for and respond to terrorist threats that involve weapons of mass destruction. This planning effort is being conducted through a partnership that involves EPA, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Public Health Service.

Why Is EPA Involved?

Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), the Clean Water Act as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the "Superfund" law, Congress gave EPA responsibilities and legal

authorities to prepare for and respond to emergencies involving oil, hazardous substances, and certain radiological materials - any of which could be a component of a weapon of mass destruction. In addition, the President has given EPA responsibility for some counter-terrorism activities. EPA's responsibilities include:

- Assisting the FBI in determining what sort of hazardous substance may be, or has been, released in a terrorist incident.
- Following an incident, assisting with environmental monitoring, decontamination efforts, and long-term site cleanup operations.

EPA's Role

EPA supports the Federal counter-terrorism program specifically by:

1. **HELPING STATE AND LOCAL RESPONDERS TO PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES.** Since 1986, EPCRA has required every community to develop an emergency plan that prepares for accidental releases of extremely hazardous substances, and should one occur, makes provisions for rapid responses to protect the community. These existing plans should be updated to incorporate planning and response to deliberate chemical releases that are the hallmark of terrorist incidents. By 2003, 50 percent of all Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) shall have incorporated planning and response to deliberate releases by terrorists into their emergency plans.

2. **TRAINING FIRST RESPONDERS.** In addition to EPA's existing training program for first responders, EPA is one of six Federal agencies participating in a program to train personnel who are likely to be first on the scene of a terrorist incident. Local first responders will be trained to respond effectively and safely to potential terrorist attacks in which chemical or biological agents have been used against a civilian population. EPA assisted in the development of the first responder training program, which will be given to 120 of the largest cities in the U.S. by 2002.

3. **PROVIDING RESOURCES IN THE EVENT OF A TERRORIST INCIDENT.** EPA has specialized facilities and uniquely qualified personnel to help local and State personnel prepare for and respond to emergencies, such as those that might result from a terrorist incident. We assist our Federal partners and State and local governments through a variety of resources, including On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs); the Environmental Response Team; other emergency response personnel; the National Enforcement Investigations Center; and various radiological response capabilities.

Need More Information?

For more information on EPA's counter-terrorism activities and other emergency planning regulations, visit our homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/ceppo/> or the NRT homepage at <http://www.nrt.org/H>

Or call the **Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Hotline** at 1-800-424-9346.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

During an emergency, the National Response System can be accessed 24 hours a day by calling the National Response Center (NRC) at 1-800-424-8802. The NRC will then call the Regional emergency spill response line and access the on-duty Federal OSC. For non-emergencies or for assistance with emergency planning, State and local response personnel can access the NRS using the phone numbers listed below.

Region 1 (Boston):	617-573-96414
Region 2 (New York):	732-321-66564
Region 3 (Philadelphia):	215-566-32414
Region 4 (Atlanta):	404-562-87214
Region 5 (Chicago):	312-353-2318
Region 6 (Dallas):	214-665-22704
Region 7 (Kansas City):	913-551-79524
Region 8 (Denver):	303-312-68384
Region 9 (San Francisco):	415-744-22934
Region 10 (Seattle):	206-553-67094