

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**Simultaneous Working Session
Border 2012 Program Goal 5: Emergency Preparedness and
Response**

**Wednesday, May 11, 2011
9:30 am-12:00pm
San Antonio, Texas**

Meeting Participants:

Lluvia Cervantes (SEGOB, Protección Civil)
 Yanet Manzo Hernández (PROFEPA)
 Mark Mijoness (EPA HQ OEM)
 Beatriz Oliveira (EPA HQ OEM)
 Steve Weiner (EPA HQ OITA)
 Jim Staves (EPA Region 6)
 Brandi Todd (EPA Region 6)
 Jhana Enders (EPA Region 6)
 Maria Sisneros (EPA Region 6)
 Lida Tan (EPA Region 9)
 Syed Qadir (US National Response Center)
 Bob Mackay (NORTHCOM)
 Oziel Vela (USCG Exercise Support Team #3)
 Hanz Huth (Arizona Department of Environmental Quality)
 Luduro Sanchez (Protección Civil, Matamoros)
 Ethel Garcia (Tohono O'odham Nation)
 Arturo Ramírez látigo (Protección Civil Matamoros)
 Eduardo Del Angel (Protección Civil)
 Ludoro Sánchez (Protección Civil Matamoros)
 Robert Monsivaiz (Dona Ana County, NM Fire and Emergency)
 Eugenia Posada (TCEQ)
 Mike Vizzier (San Diego County Department of Environmental Health)
 Eduardo Olivarez (Hidalgo County, TX Department of Health, Region 6 Gulf Task Force)
 Waldo Lopez (City of Laredo, TX Department of Health, Region 6 Falcon Task Force)
 Martin Castillo (Protección Civil)
 Humberto Donjuan López (PCNL, Protección Civil Nuevo León)
 José Arreola (BECC/COCEF)
 Mario Modesto (BECC/COCEF)
 Carlos Gomez Unda (Aduana México)
 Mario Rodriguez (DEPC BC)
 Steve Khan (County of San Diego)
 Sean Cazares SERMANAT, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores(SRE))

Introduction and Upcoming Border Events	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Mark Mjones (EPA HQ OEM) thanked all meeting participants for attending and announced that because many of the same people attended the May 10, 2011 face to face meeting, the Goal 5 Simultaneous Working Session could be used to briefly cover some of the topics already discussed and then focus on the 2010 Deepwater Horizon (DWH) spill. ▪ Ms. Beatriz Oliveira (EPA HQ OEM) stated that many of the upcoming border events were discussed on May 10 and did not need to be addressed again. However, she noted that the Goal 5 Border-wide Workgroup has

	<p>proposed holding a work-plan planning meeting in conjunction with the August 17-18, 2011 US-Mexico Incident Command System (ICS) and Exercise Design Knowledge Exchange (KE) and Table Top Exercise (TTX) in San Diego, CA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The planning meeting will be used to report out on the status of action items identified at the 2011 National Coordinators Meeting (NCM), as well as to discuss budgeting and resource needs for FY 2012.
US-Mexico Border Risk Assessment	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EPA Region 6 compiled a border risk assessment report by collecting data on reported hazardous substance incidents from Regions 6 and 9, Mexico's Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente, PROFEPA), Protección Civil and the United States National Response Center (NRC). ▪ Ms. Oliveira asked the group to consider whether this type of reporting should continue, as well as what the level of detail should be and how often the reports should be published or updated if they are to be continued. ▪ Mr. Jim Staves (EPA Region 6) gave an overview of the US-Mexico Border Risk Assessment. He stated that at a 2010 meeting of the Joint Response Team (JRT), PROFEPA presented the results of a border risk analysis it had completed. The analysis looked specifically at chemical accidents reported to PROFEPA from 2000 to 2008 and was the first comprehensive report on border chemical accidents that had been done during this time period. Region 6 then decided to engage in a similar analysis for the US side of the border and completed its report in 2011. ▪ Mr. Staves emphasized that all data from the US side of the border was derived from notifications delivered to the NRC, which receives 30,000 to 35,000 reports a year, including oil spill reports. This means that the data are based on spills actually reported; therefore, risks from unreported spills could not be included. In addition, Mr. Staves recognized that many of the reported spills did not present a large health risk. ▪ Region 6 receives more reports of accidental chemical spills than any other EPA region within the US. However, while Region 6 has seen a decrease in the number of reported spills over the past 10 years in its border area, Region 9 has experienced an increase in reports of a corresponding magnitude. ▪ Mr. Staves then discussed the breakdown of types of reported spills in each region. In Region 6, reports of hazardous materials spills have decreased, while unknown spills (including sewage) and oil spills have increased. In Region 9, the rate of reported hazardous materials and unknown spills has remained relatively steady, while the rate of reported oil spills has increased dramatically. ▪ The reason behind this magnitude of increase of reported oil spills in Region 9 has not yet been determined; however, one factor may be that the EPA began receiving reports of marine spills in 2004. This topic will be discussed in further detail with the NRC at a later date. ▪ Mr. Staves noted that the vast majority of hazardous materials and oil product spills are reported by the company that created the discharge, leading EPA to believe that the reports are fairly accurate. In contrast, citizens tend to give less detailed and less accurate reports. ▪ More hazmat and oil spills are reported to originate from fixed facilities than from any other type of source (transportation, pipelines, etc.) ▪ Mr. Staves also discussed the counties that receive the most spill reports in

both of the EPA border regions. In Region 6, El Paso and Cameron Counties receive the majority of reports. In Region 9, San Diego County receives 94 percent of all spill reports, dwarfing all other counties. In addition, even when looking at the two regions combined, San Diego still accounts for 76 percent of all spills reported on the US side of the border.

- On the Mexican side of the border, Reynosa received the vast majority of accidental chemical spill reports, while Matamoros and Laredo received smaller percentages. It is important to look at the data on both sides of the border in order to see that the risk across sister city pairs is not always equal. In addition, the types of spills reported between sister cities may vary greatly.
- In concluding his presentation, Mr. Staves indicated his belief that risk analyses are important in the process of prioritizing where more trainings and projects are needed along the border. However, he asked the participants to provide suggestions as to the appropriate level of analysis. In addition, he asked participants how often the analyses should be compiled (annually, biennially, every 10 years, etc.) Lastly, he asked participants to consider any other risk indicators that should be indicated in these reports; for example, chemical inventories of border facilities could be included in addition to reported chemical spills.
- Ing. Yanet Manzo Hernández (PROFEPA) then gave a brief overview of the risk analysis report compiled by PROFEPA. PROFEPA's report contains a detailed study of each sister city on the Mexican side of the border, taking into consideration affected populations and population density, among other factors.
- The aim of the report was to identify high risk activities, and each city considered in the report was given a ranking from 1 to 15 according to risk level (with a score of 1 indicating the city most at risk for chemical accidents). The city of Reynosa is currently ranked first in this prioritization hierarchy.
- This ranking has allowed PROFEPA to prioritize the need for trainings and equipment donations to the sister cities; to date, equipment has been donated through NORTHCOM to the first 10 cities on the list.
- Ing. Manzo informed the meeting participants that Mexico is committed to updating the information in its risk analysis every two years in order to aid the federal government in efficiently and appropriately prioritizing tasks.
- Mr. Eduardo Olivarez (Hidalgo County, TX Department of Health, Region 6 Gulf Task Force) stated that although it had mentioned earlier that not all sister city pairs share the same levels of risk, it is still important to look at sister cities as a pair when performing a risk analysis, especially when shared resources are involved (e.g., the Rio Grande).
- Mr. Staves agreed with this statement, and added that he will look into adding a weighted population variable to the risk analysis. Mr. Olivarez thought this would be a good idea, indicating that there are several areas along the border with large population pockets in a relatively small area. He stated, for example, that a population of 14 million people resides in the 150 mile radius area surrounding McCallen, TX.
- Mr. Staves concluded the discussion on risk analysis by suggesting that additional databases be considered when compiling future reports (CERCLIS, annual release reports from Clean Air Act facilities, etc.). He added that more detailed analyses may be best undertaken at the sister city level, and not the federal or regional level.

Bi-national Incident Notification Process

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira noted that it had been decided during the May 10, 2011 Goal 5 Border-wide Workgroup face to face meeting that the US-Mexico bi-national notification system will be revisited based on notification exercises conducted over the next year. EPA will work with PROFEPA, Protección Civil and the NRC to improve any deficiencies that may still exist. ▪ Ing. Manzo gave a brief overview of the internal communication mechanisms used within Mexico, and stated that PROFEPA will be working with Protección Civil over the coming year (mid-2011 until mid-2012) to establish a permanent notification mechanism. ▪ She added that the two agencies will look at the format of their notification reports and will utilize <i>Appendix B</i> of the Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) as a template. Furthermore, notification directories containing important contact information will be updated. Lastly, notification drills are currently being conducted once a week. Once a final report from these drills has been produced, all identified issues will be addressed. ▪ Ms. Oliveira mentioned that the bi-national notification system will be tested before the August 17-18 KE/TTX event in San Diego.
<p>New Goal 5 Sub-objectives</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira informed meeting participants that based on discussion during the May 10 face to face meeting, the Goal 5 new Sub-objective 3a will read: “By 2016, research existing agreements (including sister city plans) that allow trans-boundary movement of equipment and personnel for benchmarking purposes.” ▪ A question was raised about the possibility of offering standard bi-national response certification in order to build and maintain confidence in the abilities of local and federal responders on both sides of the border. It was clarified that this question referred not to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/ICS command, but to hazmat certification, similar to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. ▪ Ms. Lida Tan (EPA Region 9) shared that in the sister cities of Tijuana and San Diego, Mexican responders are trained in accordance with California requirements, ensuring that responders on both sides of the border have the same level of training. In addition, the state of Sonora in Mexico uses Arizona’s state-specific hazmat certification. ▪ Ms. Oliveira noted that when NORTHCOM provides funding for equipment transfers, both Mexican and US responders receive the same training before the equipment is exercised or tested. ▪ Mr. Staves stated that while Region 6 does attempt to match training levels across sister city pairs, it would be extremely difficult to establish a border-wide training standard. ▪ Mr. Oziel Vela (USCG Exercise Design Team #3) suggested that an assessment be conducted across both sides of the border in order to determine exact training and certification levels in all cities, states and regions. Once this has been done and training programs have been compared and contrasted, new benchmarks can be set. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Vela also stressed that there is a difference between training and certification, as many training sessions do not result in actual certification. ▪ Mr. Olivarez noted that through funding from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), regional bilingual training is offered for ICS levels 200, 300 and 400 up to 700 and 800. These trainings involve not just local responders from police and fire departments, but school districts, nurses, the medical reserve corps volunteers, the Red Cross and various other organizations. He

	<p>indicated that it may be possible to involve environment-focused agencies and organizations in these trainings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arturo Ramírez Látigo (Protección Civil Matamoros) stated that training programs should be tailored to the major needs of each city. These needs could be determined by a prioritization work-plan. ▪ Ms. Jhana Enders agreed with this idea, suggesting that an effective generic training program should be developed that could be modified by city or municipality. ▪ Mr. Mjones responded that although trainings currently offered by the US may vary due to more stringent state regulations, the underlying standard is always determined by OSHA technical training requirements. ▪ Ms. Oliveira noted that FEMA training is available online and could be shared with Mexican counterparts; however, they are currently not able to gain access to personal identification log-in information that is required to access these trainings. ▪ Ms. Maria Sisneros (EPA Region 6) expressed concern about the level of training on the Mexican side of the El Paso-Juarez area, and asked if PROFEPA had training resources or funding to offer. ▪ Ms. Lluvia Cervantes (SEGBOB, Protección Civil) explained that there are many training programs currently active in Mexico, and that Mexico has been provided with courses on “train the trainer” by the US in order to empower Mexico to conduct its own trainings. In addition, national meetings are regularly conducted that include participation from border responders and provide important training. ▪ Mr. Olivarez informed the group that Texas A&M University conducts one of the world’s largest fire-fighting/hazardous response team schools. The school provides classes taught in Spanish and offers ICS training. ▪ The group then discussed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between border governors that recently passed in the congresses of both the US and Mexico. This MOU, meant to be a general framework with room for specific annexes to be added later, can be used to help standardize training criteria between the two counties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was clarified that this MOU is a federal agreement and is different from the state-level border governors MOU which has yet to be signed into law.
<p>Action Item</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct assessment of existing training programs on both sides of the US-Mexico border; reassess level of emergency response training offered at the local level as well as communications regarding training.
<p>Overview of Deepwater Horizon (DWH) Spill Response</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Mjones gave a presentation on the specifics of the DWH spill, as well as on EPA’s role in the response process (See Mr. Mjones’s Deepwater Horizon Spill Response PowerPoint presentation). ▪ Mr. Mjones noted that in August 2010, he and Ms. Oliveira were part of an interagency group that met with the Mexican government at the US Department of State. Throughout the discussion, it became apparent that there was a lack of formal communication between the US and Mexico during the response. Going forward, this will be an important consideration when dealing with bi-national responses. ▪ Mr. Staves stated that the Inland JRT needs to consider what its command structure would look like in the case of a major bi-national spill. Even though the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) and USCG would take the lead, the Inland JRT would certainly play a large role in the response. Mr. Mjones agreed, noting

	<p>that it is important for coastal and inland plans to be exercised together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ing. Manzo mentioned that a commission of Mexican agencies is currently compiling a report on how the DWH spill affected Mexico as well as lessons learned for future responses.▪ Mr. Staves thanked all of the state, local and tribal task forces that worked to undertake all of the border projects that have been completed to date. Ing. Manzo closed the meeting by thanking all participants for attending.
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