

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Region 4	Calendar Year:	2023
EPA RRT Co-Chair:	Jim Webster	Email:	Webster.James@epa.gov
USCG RRT Co-Chair:	Rich Lavigne	Email:	Richard.J.Lavigne@uscg.mil
EPA RRT Coordinator:	Jed Hewitt	Email:	Hewitt.Jed@epa.gov
USCG RRT Coordinator:	Gabriella Zambrana	Email:	Gabriella.Z.Zambrana@uscg.mil

A. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.	5/15-18/2023	Baton Rouge, LA	243	
2.	10/31-11/2/2023	Louisville, KY	89	https://r4data.response.epa.gov/r4rrt/october-2023-region-4-regional-response-team-fall-meeting/
3.				

B. Activations / Notifications

1.	Dates:	04/23- 10/23	Event:	East Palestine Train Derailment	ACT		NOT	X
	Issue / Concern:	EPA R4 supported EPA R5 ICS with resources as needed.						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA R5, EPA R4, State of Ohio, ATSDR, ORSANCO						
	Decisions Made:	EPA R4 OSCs supported Region 5 with Key Leadership Positions as needed. ORSANCO requested information from Unified Command and the information flow was slow due to ORSANCO not being a member of UC. This created challenges for water sampling of the Ohio River early in the response.						
2.	Dates:	08/23-10/23	Event:	Hurricane Idalia	ACT	X	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	EPA Region 4 was given four FEMA Mission Assignments: ESF-3 Federal Operational Support (FOS)/SURGE for Liaison and RRC staffing ESF-10 FOS/SURGE for Liaison and RRC staffing ESF-10 Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) Landfill Strike Teams ESF-10 DFA Hazard Assessment Response Team (HART)						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA R4 Superfund Emergency Management Division (SEMD), Land, Chemicals and Redevelopment Division (LCRD), Water Division						
	Decisions Made:	On August 31, EPA R4 SEMD deployed two HART, and partnered with FDEP to conduct assessments and response operations as directed. Each EPA HART will be comprised of one Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) and one Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team Contractor (START) along with emergency response equipment. One team will be staged and operate out of the Tallahassee area and the other will be staged and operate out of the Gainesville area. The two Landfill Strike Teams (LSTs) completed 302 inspections based on a list of Disaster Debris Management Site (DDMS) locations provided by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The Mission Assignment period of performance ended on 9/29/2023. Previously identified vulnerable National Priority List (NPL) remedial sites within the forecast cone indicate no damages or releases associated with Hurricane Idalia.						
3.	Dates:		Event:	Maui Wildfire Response	ACT	X	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	Lithium-ion battery debris and waste management.						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA R10, EPA R4, State of Hawaii						

	Decisions Made:	Many lessons learned regarding disposal and shipment of damaged lithium-ion batteries. Bryan Vasser, OSC in R4, is on the national workgroup.			
4.	Dates:	08/23 – 09/23	Event:	Hurricane Idalia	ACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NOT <input type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Urban, critical incident and maritime search and rescue, reconstitution of the marine transportation system (MTS), pollution response ESF-9: Support staff to RRCC/State EOC			
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA R4, State of Florida			
	Decisions Made:	On August 26, 2023, CGD7 stood up a Crisis Action Team, which escalated into a full Area Command, in response to the search and rescue, MTS and pollution response concerns in the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia (CAT4, \$9.3B+ in damages). A FEMA ESF-9 mission assignment of \$4.3M was authorized. More than 300 USCG personnel, 11 aircraft, and 25 cutters were deployed to render lifesaving and port recovery assistance within 251 counties across three states.			
5.	Dates:	09/2023	Event:	Port Manatee	ACT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution			
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, Port of Manatee, FDEP			
	Decisions Made:	USCG Sector St Petersburg accessed the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to respond a discharge of crude oil in Port Manatee basin with a total response cost of \$802k. Boom was deployed and 19k+ tons of oily water and 6.4 tons of debris were recovered. No source was located.			
6.	Dates:	09/2023	Event:	Brunswick East River Mystery Sheen – Ongoing Discharge	ACT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution			
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA, Georgia DNR, Georgia Port Authority			
	Decisions Made:	This is an ongoing discharge as of 2020 in Mayors Point, GA. The source appears to be emanating from the shoreline near the Georgia Port Authority facility and the nearby Pac Comm facility. No source or responsible party has been determined at this time. Both facilities have deployed boom and are actively recovering product. The USCG and EPA are in planning discussions for future response actions.			
7.	Dates:		Event:		ACT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:				
	Agencies Involved:				
	Decisions Made:				

C. RRT Exercises					
1.	Dates:		Event:		
	Agencies Involved:				
	Summary of exercise:				

2.	Dates:		Event:	
	Agencies Involved:			
	Summary of exercise:			
3.	Dates:		Event:	
	Agencies Involved:			
	Summary of exercise:			

D. Changes in RRT Leadership

Agency	Outgoing Personnel	Incoming personnel
1) USCG District 7		Lori Loughran (Alt Co-Chair) Lori.A.Loughran2@uscg.mil
2) Tennessee State Designee	Barry Brawley	Ben Bolton Ben.Bolton@tn.gov
3)		

E. Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the RRT (which may help other RRTs)

Lithium Battery Topics:
 Solar power plants are not currently regulated beyond construction standards. It is strongly recommended but not required that they have emergency response plans due to the potential of lithium battery fires. Improper charging cables are a huge risk. Currently there are no reporting requirements of ignition incidents, registration requirements of accumulation facilities – may register but there is very little regulation. The main gases released from batteries include carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sometimes hydrofluoric chloride. First indicator is often carbon monoxide (CO). Reporting – most fire depts are not notifying, can states collect this data for any fires involving lithium ion batteries? What tools do states have to collect this data? There has been discussion within Region 4 for the ability to report and query search these incidents through the NRC.

F. Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Planning and Coordination Efforts

Region 4 identified Buck McCloud of Kentucky, as the new leader to help coordinate RRT correspondence between Region 4 States.

EPA Region 4 reached out to the Seminole Tribe of Florida to facilitate a working relationship relative to emergency response operations, training opportunities, etc. Our goal was not to replace the already established relationships, but rather to help foster a stronger relationship with our Emergency Response Section that will help both entities be better prepared to respond to emergencies that may fall within our respective jurisdictions.

G. Challenges and Issues (and Operational Requirements Which May Require NRT Attention)

A USCG case in Savannah involving undeclared cargo (lithium-ion batteries) had high potential of thermal runaway and possible subsequent damage to an inspected commercial vessel. 15 containers were placed on hold until their contents could be verified. This event raised the concern of limited available staging areas to contain and combat lithium-ion fires.

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Caribbean	Calendar Year:	2023
EPA RRT Co-Chair:	Doug Kodama	Email:	kodama.doug@epa.gov
USCG RRT Co-Chair:	Richard Lavigne	Email:	Richard.J.Lavigne@uscg.mil
EPA RRT Coordinator:	Steve Touw	Email:	touw.steve@epa.gov
USCG RRT Coordinator:	Gabriella Zambrana	Email:	Gabriella.Z.Zambrana@uscg.mil

E. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
4.	14-16 March 2023	USCG Rio Bayamon Housing Conference Room	50	Site Profile - CRRT March 2023 Meeting - NRT

F. Activations / Notifications

8.	Dates:	10/2023	Event:	Mona Island Vessel Grounding	ACT	NOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution, harm to protected species					
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA, NOAA, DOI, PR DRNA, VITEMA, FWS, VI DPNR, NPS					
	Decisions Made:	A derelict vessel grounded on Mona Island, discharging oil and causing an impact to various protected plant and animal species. The CG utilized federal funds to remove the oil and hazardous substances from the vessel. NOAA successfully petitioned to use their marine debris program to remove the vessel.					
9.	Dates:	10/2023	Event:	Bonnie G Vessel Grounding	ACT	NOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution					
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, USVI, NOAA, FWS					

	Decisions Made:	The 180 ft commercial vessel BONNIE G grounded .5 miles south of St. Thomas airport with 13k gallons of diesel and seven vehicles aboard. A Coast Guard air asset conducted an area observation flight. The USCG stood up an Incident Command accessed the Oil Spill Liability Trust fund for \$30k for management cost and boom deployment. The threat of discharge of oil and release of hazardous substances into the environment was satisfactorily mitigated and the vessel was placed in a dead-ship tow to a dock in St. Thomas for survey and management.					
10.	Dates:		Event:		ACT	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:						
	Agencies Involved:						
	Decisions Made:						
11.	Dates:		Event:		ACT	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:						
	Agencies Involved:						
	Decisions Made:						
12.	Dates:		Event:		ACT	NOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:						
	Agencies Involved:						
	Decisions Made:						

G. RRT Exercises – *No CRRT exercises during the period of this report.*

4.	Dates:		Event:		
	Agencies Involved:				
	Summary of exercise:				

H. Changes in RRT Leadership

Agency	Outgoing Personnel	Incoming personnel
4) USCG District 7		Lori Loughran (Alt Co-Chair) Lori.A.Loughran2@uscg.mil
5) EPA	Steve Touw (retiring)	
6)		

E. Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the RRT (which may help other RRTs)

Lithium Ion batteries are among the most significant threats in the maritime FOSC zone.

G. Federal, State, and Local Planning and Coordination Efforts

Steve Touw is retiring after more than 30 years with the EPA. We wholeheartedly thank him for his distinguished service, professionalism and contributions to enhancing the CRRT's emergency response posture. He will be missed, and we wish him the very best in his future endeavors!

H. Challenges and Issues (and Operational Requirements Which May Require NRT Attention)