

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Region 4	Calendar Year:	2024
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:	Alex Kulakowski	Email:	Kulakowski.Alexandra@epa.gov
USCG RRT Coordinator:	Simon Juul-Hindsgaul	Email:	Simon.juul-hindsgaul2@uscg.mil
A. Annual Meetings			
	Dates	Location	# of Attendees
1.	29-30 May 2024	Gautier, MS	80
			May 2024 Regional Response Team Meeting – Region 4 Regional Response Team (epa.gov)
2.	22-24 Oct 2024	Atlanta, Georgia	
			(cancelled due to Hurricanes Helene & Milton)
B. Activations / Notifications			
	Dates:	See below	Event: Hurricanes Debby, Helene, Milton
			ACT <input type="checkbox"/> X NOT <input type="checkbox"/>
1.	Issue / Concern:	ESF-10 Pollution response, ESF-9 and maritime search and rescue, reconstitution of the marine transportation system (MTS), support staff to RRCC/State EOCs. Debby: 8/5/24 – 8/8/24 Helene: 9/23/24 – 10/4/24 Milton: 10/7/24 – 10/13/24	
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, FEMA R4/6, EPA R4, NOAA, States of Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina	
	Decisions Made:	CG District 7 stood up a full Area Command (AC) on three separate occasions in response to the search and rescue, MTS, and pollution response concerns in the aftermath of Hurricane Debby (CAT1), Helene (CAT4), and Milton (CAT3) landfall in Florida and the interior southeast states. The AC was responsible for managing appx. \$27M in FEMA mission assignments, including the activation of multiple EPLO/LOFRs, aircraft, flood response teams, and NSF Strike Teams along with NOAA for targeting and analysis, deployed to render lifesaving, port recovery assistance, and pollution response across multiple states and CG districts, resulting in direct support to 6+ IMTs, ~37 lives saved and 1,000+ pollution targets identified.	
	Dates:	9/6/24, 9/17/24	Event: Buxton Beach FUDS (Formerly Used Defense Site)
			ACT <input type="checkbox"/> X NOT <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Issue / Concern:	Substantial threat of discharge in the vicinity of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore: The National Park Service in coordination with the Department of the Interior requested an RRT IV activation to address concerns arising from the ongoing remediation at the Buxton Beach FUDS under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) statute (10 United States Code (USC) 2700 et seq.).	
	Agencies Involved:	DOI, NPS, USACE, NOAA, FWS, USCG, USN, EPA R4, FEMA R4, State of North Carolina, Dare County,	
	Decisions Made:	On 6 September, the RRT IV convened a coordination/consultation call to address DOI’s request for RRT IV activation to address a potential threat of discharge at Buxton Beach, NC. The RRT consultation afforded partners the opportunity to voice their concerns with the ongoing FUDS remediation being undertaken at Buxton Beach by USACE. Following that call, it was decided there would be a follow-up call on 17 September to further discuss USACE actions and any emergency response authorities from the collective agencies that may be able to contribute to the ongoing remediation effort. In the intervening period, USACE initiated additional remedial actions to address and limit/contain any potential discharge. On the 17 September call, the USACE briefed the RRT	

		membership on the significant ongoing and future actions being taken in accordance with the FUDS remediation program at the Buxton Beach site. Based on this information, and USACE's commitment to maintain transparency with affected parties and stakeholders, along with CG Sector North Carolina's ability to continue to respond to any reports of discharge as appropriate, the RRT IV closed the case with no additional action taken.					
3.	Dates:	08/24	Event:	SeaPort Manatee Spill	ACT	NOT	X
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution					
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, NOAA, SeaPort Manatee, FDEP					
	Decisions Made:	USCG Sector St Petersburg accessed the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to respond to a discharge of crude oil in Port Manatee basin with a total response cost of \$37k. Boom was deployed, and 25 gallons of heavy fuel oil were recovered. The source was determined to be coming from a broken pipe in the port. The contents of this pipe matched to oil spill samples taken from a pollution incident in SeaPort Manatee the previous year that resulted in 3500 gallons of heavy fuel oil recovered.					
4.	Dates:	09/24-Ongoing	Event:	Hurricane Helene	ACT	X	NOT
	Issue / Concern:	<p>EPA Region 4 was given 14 FEMA Mission Assignments (5 ESF-10 and 9 ESF-3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESF-3 Federal Operational Support (FOS)/SURGE for Liaison and RRC staffing ESF-3 FOS for SMEs for Damage Assessments in North Carolina ESF-3 Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) for Mobile Water Lab to North Carolina ESF-3 DFA for SME in TN ESF-3 FOS Mobile Water Lab to Florida ESF-3 DFA Mobile Water Lab to Florida ESF-3 FOS Pre-stage Mobile Water Lab ESF-3 DFA SME staffing ESF-3 DFA for Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Assessment Teams in NC ESF-10 FOS/SURGE for staffing RRCC, REOC, and response locations. ESF-10 DFA Hazard Assessment Response Team (HART) in NC ESF-10 DFA HAZMAT Technical Specialists for Debris Disposal and Mgmt. Operations in TN ESF-10 DFA for Landfill Strike Teams in FL <p>ESF-10 FOS for Staffing response location for TN support</p>					
	Agencies Involved:	EPA R4 Superfund Emergency Management Division (SEMD), Land, Chemicals and Redevelopment Division (LCRD), Water Division					
	Decisions Made:	<p>On October 3, EPA R4 SEMD deployed four Landfill Strike Teams (LST) to support debris disposal and management sites operations in Florida. The LST conducted site visits to ensure that hazardous materials and other prohibited items were not placed in DDMSs. The LST stood down through Hurricane Milton and continued operations after the storm passed. On October 2, EPA R4 SEMD deployed Hazmat Assessment/Mitigation Teams for orphan container recovery operations in western NC with Emergency and Rapid Response Services contractors. The Teams recovered 1,611 containers (as of January 8, 2025). The mission assignment for these operations currently expires on March 28, 2025. The EPA Water Division Subject Matter Experts performed ESF-3 damage assessments across North Carolina with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The EPA deployed two Mobile Water Laboratories to North Carolina that received and analyzed a total of 1,561 samples for Total Coliform/E. coli. A Mission Assignment was received to provide Tennessee with Hazardous Materials Technical Specialist to support and augment debris disposal and management</p>					

		operations. The EPA and its contractors continue to provide personnel for technical support at Douglas Lake, the mission assignment is currently set to end June 16, 2025.				
	Dates: 10/24-11/24	Event: Hurricane Milton		ACT	X	NOT
5.	Issue / Concern:	EPA Region 4 was given four FEMA Mission Assignments: ESF-3 Federal Operational Support (FOS)/SURGE for SME to FL EOC ESF-10 FOS/SURGE for Liaison and RRC staffing ESF-10 Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) Landfill Strike Teams for FL ESF-10 DFA HazMat Assessment Teams for FL				
	Agencies Involved:	EPA R4 Superfund Emergency Management Division (SEMD), Land, Chemicals and Redevelopment Division (LCRD), Water Division				
	Decisions Made:	On October 12, the Landfill Strike Teams resumed operations in Florida at DDMS sites after Hurricane Milton's Landfall. Two On-Scene Coordinator-led Hazard Assessment and Response Teams assessed Florida identified facilities in the impact area as prioritized by the State.				
	Dates: 09/24-10/24	Event: BioLab Fire		ACT		NOT X
6.	Issue / Concern:	EPA Region 4 worked as part of Unified Command with Rockdale County, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and BioLab, to respond to the fire and subsequent cleanup at the BioLab pool chemical manufacturing facility in Conyers, Ga. The EPA performed air monitoring for the duration of the emergency response for the safety of both workers and the public.				
	Agencies Involved:	EPA Region 4, Rockdale County, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division				
	Decisions Made:	The EPA used stationary and roving monitoring instruments to monitor the air quality for chlorine and related compounds around the BioLab facility and provided Rockdale County with the results to inform Rockdale County's public. The air monitoring results were posted to: https://www.epa.gov/ga/conyers-ga-biolab-fire .				

C. RRT Exercises						
	Dates:	6/12/24 – 6/13/24	Event:	Lowcountry Area Committee PREP FSE		
1.	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA R4, State of South Carolina, Charleston County, Ingevity, multiple other federal, state, local, NGO partners.				
	Summary of exercise:	On June 12, 2024, at 4:00pm, Ingevity suffers a complete structural failure of Aboveground Storage Tank (AST) 306, discharging its entire contents of 590,000 gallons of Tall Oil (WCD for facility). Approximately 500,000 gallons of product made it into the adjacent marsh and Filbin Creek; an additional 90,000 gallons discharged directly into the Cooper River. 3-phase exercise: notification, equipment deployment to validate GRS (geographic response strategies), stand up unified command and incident command post.				
	Dates:	9/24/24 - 9/25/24	Event:	Coastal Georgia EV Hazmat Shipboard Response PREP FE		
2.	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA R4, State of Georgia, American Ro-Ro (ARC), multiple other federal, state, local, NGO partners.				
	Summary of exercise:	Response to a roll on roll off (RORO) shipboard fire involving lithium-ion batteries at Colonel's Terminal, Brunswick, GA. Exercise included workshops for ion battery hazards, shipboard firefighting, HazSub Annex familiarization, CG Incident Management Assist Team (IMAT) Training, ship walkthrough with first responders on a vessel, Geographical Response Strategies (GRS) validations, and an incident command post.				

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

D. Changes in RRT Leadership

Agency	Outgoing Personnel	Incoming personnel
1) USCG District 7	LCDR Gabrielle Zambrana	Simon Juul-Hindsgaul (RRT Coordinator)
2) EPA Region 4	Jed Hewitt	Alexandra Kulakowski (RRT Coordinator)
3) Kentucky State Designee	Buck McCloud	Robert Blair

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

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

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

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

- Interoperability remains a challenge:** during an interagency response, the responder tools to facilitate document collaboration and user interface across response applications are significantly degraded or in some cases blocked when going from .mil to .gov or state/NGOs. *Highly recommend RRTs and NRT continue to prioritize/identify broadly accessible multipurpose common operating platforms in all preparedness and planning efforts.*
- Frequency of RRT meetings:** over the past several years, the fiscal environment, federal budgetary process, and active hurricane seasons in the Southeastern United States and Caribbean Basin, have made the planning and execution of semi-annual RRT meetings extremely difficult for our federal, state, and local partners. And the advances in virtual meeting technology, if not a direct replacement for in-person coordination and collaboration, have increased the overall connectivity amongst the RRT membership throughout the year. *Recommend the NRT review and reconsider the current requirement for semi-annual meetings in favor of an annual meeting periodicity requirement.*

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Caribbean	Calendar Year:	2024
EPA RRT Co-Chair:	Shawna Hoppe	Email:	Hoppe.shawna@epa.gov
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EPA RRT Coordinator:	Eric Daly	Email:	Daly.eric@epa.gov
USCG RRT Coordinator:	Simon Juul-Hindsgaul	Email:	Simon.juul-hindsgaul2@uscg.mil

E. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
3.	23-25 Jan 2024	USCG Rio Bayamon Housing Conference Room	59	Site Profile - CRRT January 2024 Meeting
4.	13-14 Nov 2024	FEMA Training Center St. Croix, USVI	70	Site Profile - CRRT November 2024 Meeting - NRT

F. Activations / Notifications

7.	Dates:	07/24 - 12/24	Event:	S/V Obsession	ACT	NOT	X
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution, harm to protected species and critical habitat					
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA, NOAA, DOI, FWS, PR DRNA					
	Decisions Made:	A 72' sailing vessel grounded on Culebra Island reef, discharging oil and causing an impact to various protected plant, animal species, and critical habitats. RRT facilitated interagency coordination to ensure alignment amongst federal and territorial partners and supported CG Sector San Juan incident management team (SSJ IMT) with overseeing the safe removal of the vessel, proper extraction of 1500 gallons of diesel and all engine oil. The CG SSJ IMT accessed the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for under \$3 million ensuring compliance with federal and environmental protection standards and safe removal of the vessel from the sensitive area.					
8.	Dates:	02/24 - Ongoing	Event:	Virgina Islands Water and Power Authority (VI WAPA) Tank #11 Spill	ACT	NOT	X
	Issue / Concern:	Pollution					
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, USVI, NOAA, FWS, DOI, VITEMA, VI WAPA, VI DPRNR					
	Decisions Made:	RRT facilitated coordination calls with interagency partners and stakeholders to ensure alignment amongst federal and territorial responders and implementation of administrative directives focused on enforcing cost-effective long-term response efforts. The CG SSJ IMT accessed the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for management cost, containment, and monitoring. The threat of discharge of oil and release of hazardous substances into the environment was satisfactorily mitigated. The SSJ IMT is in the process of turning over the site to local federal and territorial authorities for long-term maintenance and oversight.					
9.	Dates:	06/24	Event:	Suiza Dairy Anhydrous Ammonia Release, San Juan, Puerto Rico	ACT	NOT	X
	Issue / Concern:	EPA was notified in June of an anhydrous ammonia release at the Suiza Dairy facility in San Juan, PR. Workers at the dairy had been on strike for several weeks and Suiza personnel had difficulty accessing the facility. Access was eventually granted to facility personnel, and the release was secured. EPA granted access in July and inspected the ammonia system. Significant ammonia readings were detected within the building and Suiza agreed to remove the remaining ammonia from the system.					
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, PRDOH, San Juan PD					
	Decisions Made:	EPA issued the facility an order to remove the ammonia and is coordinating with the facility on the work plan.					

	Dates:	09/24	Event:	Guayanilla PR-127, Guayanilla, Puerto Rico	ACT	NOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	Issue / Concern:	There has been ongoing visible oil presence observed inside of manholes located on the road (PR-127) outside of the Genera-Costa Sur Plan in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico. These manholes are not on the Genera property but are adjacent to the facility. EPA has previously installed an inflatable plug at Genera's property to stop the oil from entering the manhole. This plug has failed. EPA initially provided technical assistance in April 2013 to the United States Coast Guard (USCG) under a Pollution Removal Funding Authorization (PRFA). The site name was Mystery Spill. The USCG passed the lead to EPA in July 2013. EPA continued this investigation under the site name, Guayanilla Bay Oil Spill. EPA performed additional work in 2020 under the site name, Guayanilla Oil. The most recent incident occurred on September 20, 2024. Around 4,500 gallons of oily water was removed using absorption mats and vac trucks by Genera. Although not required by EPA, Genera will continue to pump the manholes out, to stop the immediate threat to a Guayanilla Bay, until EPA mitigation efforts begin. The current 2025 project by EPA is under a new FPN and the site name is Guayanilla PR-127.					
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, USCG, DNER					
	Decisions Made:	OSC has opened the fund and will make a site visit in March 2025 to determine the mitigation path forward for the site.					

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		Simon Juul-Hindsgaul (RRT Coordinator)
5) US EPA CRRT Co-Chair	Doug Kodama	Shawna Hoppe
6) US EPA CRRT Coordinator	Steve Touw	Eric Daly

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

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

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

EPA met with FEMA and PR Commonwealth agencies (PREMB, DNER, DOH) at the PREMB EOC in July 2024. The meeting was set up to discuss the process for requests for federal support during a declared disaster and exchange ideas on pre-disaster and post-disaster coordination among our agencies. The meeting was very productive as several areas were identified where our agencies can work forward for improve our coordination. These include the development and sharing of agency fact sheets regarding roles and capabilities, diagramming of process for making requests and key contacts in the process, identifying potential gaps in capabilities based on magnitude of a disaster, sharing of relevant emergency response plans and Operations Plans, review/modification of Pre-scripted mission assignment language for possible types of assistance, especially where there may be known gaps, delivering presentations from one agency to another among key personnel, which is not only to provide information but also introduce key contacts among agencies, and arranging for regular meetings among agencies, including around other meeting venues, such as semi-annual CRRT meetings and FEMA Readiness week. Next steps for this engagement will be development of an implementation plan to perform all of the work items for improved coordination identified above.

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