



Summary

Regional Incident Survey Team (RIST) Report

Southern-1003-Transportation

Regional Incident Survey Teams (RIST)

RISTs gather information for the National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center. RISTs are composed of individuals from around the country who are skilled and experienced in hazardous materials (hazmat) response or experienced in the hazmat industry. RIST members are part of a team invited by a local jurisdiction or state authority to conduct a survey of an incident response of interest and record information from the responder's perspective. In no case is the data intended to be used to criticize or condemn response actions, but rather to share lessons learned and smart practices with other emergency responders who may face a similar response.

Incident Type

Transportation

Container

Atmospheric pressure rail car

Hazardous Material

Ethanol, UN 1987

Overview



An atmospheric pressure rail car was being moved from a staging area to an ethanol off-loading facility. During the movement, a total of seven rail cars derailed spilling ethanol. The incident occurred just after noon with clear conditions, temperature of 26°C (80°F), and light winds. The area consisted of light industrial, commercial and light residential occupancies.

Several agencies responded to the incident and an efficient command structure was established to manage operations. Working relationships have been developed over the years and can be related to the participation of the agencies in Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) activities, Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) planning, Homeland Security Committees, as well as training and exercise activities.



Lessons Learned/Smart Practices

- The Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) is an excellent resource for first responders responding to incidents involving hazardous materials.
- Be aware of how scene access can affect operations.
- The actions and information provided by the initial arriving unit can set the stage for a successful incident conclusion.
 - Incident size up
 - Establishment of Command
 - Effective communications to other responding units
- A strong incident command system provides for an effective flow of communications during emergency operations.
- The use of an Incident Action Plan (IAP) contributes to scene management during complex incident operations.
- Maintain chain of command and unity of command throughout the incident.
- Extend personnel accountability systems to non-fire personnel.

- Establish working relationships with other agencies prior to the occurrence of incidents.
- Consider assigning a safety officer exclusively dedicated to hazmat operations (assistant safety officer for hazmat).
- Consider moving hazardous materials entry team personnel to a separate tactical channel so as to provide for a secure communications link between entry personnel and hazmat branch director/hazmat group supervisor.
- Consider special training for rail car emergencies.
- Designate a decontamination area prior to entry into the hot zone.
- The pre-existing relationship between the local response agency and the clean-up contractor was instrumental in the success of this incident.

For more information on this and other incidents visit the National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center at <http://www.hazmatfc.com/>