



## Summary

# Regional Incident Survey Team (RIST) Report

## Central-1001-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

Motor Carrier (MC) 312

### Hazardous Material

Hydrochloric Acid UN #1789

## Overview

This chemical transportation accident occurred in the central region of the United States just after sunrise on a clear, crisp Monday morning in late November. An MC 312, carrying 20411.7 kg (45,000 pounds) of a 36% concentration of hydrochloric acid (United Nations' identification number: 1789), was traveling through a construction zone. When the driver failed to negotiate a curve on an interstate ramp onto a bridge crossing a large river, the resulting crash produced a liquid and vapor release of product into a commercial area of an urban community at the beginning of rush hour.

Police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) agencies were dispatched to the scene upon receipt of the 9-1-1 call from the trapped driver of the truck. The first arriving fire department unit donned self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), established initial command and ordered responding fire personnel to don SCBA. Initial scene operations focused on rescuing the trapped driver, clearing civilians off the bridge and immediate vicinity, isolating the area, and rerouting traffic. Size-up revealed a liquid product release and a significant vapor plume traveling east along the river bank to a commercial area of the city.



A rapid risk assessment revealed that the flow of product and weather conditions would allow first arriving units to approach and make physical contact with the driver while staying out of the product and resulting vapor cloud. As a result, a successful rescue of the driver was effected by first arriving police and fire units from the host and adjacent fire departments utilizing bunker gear with SCBA and an attic ladder. Police officers from both participating agencies quickly evacuated people from vehicles on the bridge and in the immediate danger area. A perimeter with exclusion zones was established and non-essential personnel were cleared from the scene.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated in anticipation of possible evacuations. Representatives from multiple agencies arrived to address strategic goals associated with the incident. A Command Post (CP) was established with unified command to initiate rapid information sharing between police, fire, and EMS agencies. Tactical objectives were established to address the expanding vapor cloud, the threat of the product entering storm drains and the continuing release of product from the vessel.

Shelter-in-place orders were given to protect a large casino population immediately downwind of the incident. Monitoring stations were established to determine impact of the vapor cloud in the

communities on both sides of the river. Construction crews in the area offered assistance in providing earthmoving equipment to assist fire crews in creating dikes to contain the migrating product. Hazmat crews, donning Level A protective gear, worked to stop the release. Within four hours of the initial call, emergency crews had cleared the scene leaving contractors to complete the cleanup.

## Lessons Learned/Smart Practices

- The staffing of the battalion vehicles with two command staff—a battalion chief (BC) and a district safety officer (DSO)—was a critical component in the rescue.
- The early establishment of the EOC brought key decision makers together quickly which resulted in the identification of a critical threat to the city sewer systems.
- Established relationships and training between law enforcement, fire departments, EMS and the private sector were critical in limiting the effects of the incident.
- Creative use of available resources reduced the amount of vapor being produced, protected vulnerable infrastructure and confirmed the effectiveness of sheltering-in-place.

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