

11.0 Local Emergency Management and First Response Roles and Responsibilities

Iowa's county and municipal emergency management coordinators and first responders have the primary responsibility of planning, preparing, and managing emergency response operations related to crude oil and ethanol rail transportation incidents occurring within their jurisdictional boundaries. Initial response will be managed by local emergency responders, including emergency managers, fire departments, law enforcement, public works, and emergency medical services. If local capabilities are or are anticipated to be overwhelmed, local mutual aid and/or state resources will work with local responders to support and augment required services.

Many of Iowa's local responder agencies are increasingly challenged to maintain response capabilities for routine, everyday incidents. Therefore, their ability to undertake new and additional planning and preparedness efforts is limited. At the same time, due to the dramatic increase in crude oil and ethanol rail transportation across the state, more preparedness activity falls on them. Most emergency managers interviewed during this Study reported that their time is often spent addressing day-to-day operational issues. They are aware that the likelihood of crude oil or ethanol rail incident, happening in their jurisdiction, is small. While such an incident is a concern to emergency managers that were interviewed, planning and preparing for crude oil and ethanol rail accidents is not a top priority. The local ability to focus on updating and maintaining plans, mutual aid agreements, and preparedness measures, to address this hazard, often taxes current staffing capabilities and limits the ability to address new issues.

Many local emergency managers' positions are part-time in their respective local governments. Emergency Managers also often hold other job responsibilities, such as public information, city administration, 9-1-1 coordination, or serve as local first responders. These additional responsibilities require emergency managers to divide their time among all their responsibilities, and may not allow them sufficient time to focus on emergency management – mitigation, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

Of the 731-registered fire departments in Iowa, 90.3 percent are all volunteer and 3.3 percent are all career. The remaining 6.4 percent are a combination of career and volunteer firefighters. Specific to crude oil and ethanol rail incident response, only 26.54 percent of all fire departments provide technical/specialized rescue capabilities, and 11.90 percent provide hazardous materials response capabilities.⁵⁴

Most of Iowa's rural and volunteer fire departments have limited capabilities and resources to manage large crude oil or ethanol transportation incidents. Locals often rely on local mutual aid, regional, and state support to provide operational staff, technical support, and specialized teams to conduct operations outside of their normal operational capabilities. Urban fire departments, in larger cities, have hazardous materials response capabilities and provide regional hazardous materials response capabilities to neighboring jurisdictions.

⁵⁴ US Fire Administration, *National Fire Department Census Quick Facts, January 2015*, <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/census/summary>. Accessed December 09, 2015.

11.1 Local Emergency Management Fund

Under Iowa Code 29C.17, the state requires that a local emergency management fund be created in the office of the county treasurer. Any unencumbered balance in the fund during the fiscal year may not revert to county general revenues. Additionally, any reimbursement, matching funds, moneys received from sale of property, or monies obtained from any source in connection with the local emergency management program must be deposited in the local emergency management fund. The local emergency management agency's approved budget shall be funded by one or any combination of the following options, as determined by the commission:

1. A countywide special levy pursuant to Section 331.424, Subsection 1.
2. Per capita allocation funded from city and county general funds or by a combination of city and county special levies, which may be apportioned among the member jurisdictions.
3. An allocation computed as each jurisdiction's relative share of the total assessed valuation within the county.
4. A voluntary share allocation.
5. Other funding sources allowed by law.

A political subdivision may appropriate additional funds for the purpose of supporting commission expenses relating to special or unique matters extending beyond the resources of the agency.

Joint emergency response communications services under Section 29C.9, Subsection 6, shall be funded as provided for in the agreement entered into pursuant to Chapter 28E.

Expenditures from the local emergency management fund shall be made on warrants drawn by the county auditor, supported by claims and vouchers signed by the emergency management coordinator or chairperson of the commission.

Subject to Chapter 24, the commission shall adopt, certify, and provide a budget, on or before February 28th of each year, to the funding entities determined pursuant to Subsection 2.

The form of the budget shall be as prescribed by the department of management. Any portion of a tax levied by a county or city to support the local emergency management agency shall be identified separately on tax statements issued by the county treasurer.⁵⁵

11.2 Local Emergency Planning Committees

Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) are required under federal law to develop and maintain emergency hazardous materials response plans, reviewing the plans at least annually, and provide information about hazardous chemicals in the local community to citizens and responders requesting the information under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA).⁵⁶

Local emergency response plans must include the following elements:

⁵⁵ Iowa Code, Chapter 29C, *Emergency Management Security*. Print.

⁵⁶ US Environmental Protection Agency, *Local Emergency Planning Committees*. <http://www.epa.gov/epcra/local-emergency-planning-committees>. Retrieved on December 8, 2015.

- Identification of facilities and transportation routes of extremely hazardous substances
- Description of emergency response procedures, on and off site
- Designation of a community coordinator and facility emergency coordinator(s) to implement the plan
- Outline of emergency notification procedures
- Description of how to determine the probable affected area and population by releases
- Description of local emergency equipment and facilities and the persons responsible for them
- Outline of evacuation plans
- A training program for emergency responders (including schedules)
- Methods and schedules for exercising emergency response plans⁵⁷

As a minimum, each LEPC should be comprised of a representative from each of the following groups or organizations:

- Elected state and local officials,
- Law enforcement personnel,
- Civil defense personnel,
- Firefighting personnel,
- First-aid personnel,
- Health personnel,
- Local environmental personnel,
- Hospital personnel,
- Transportation personnel,
- Broadcast and print media,
- Community groups, and
- Owners and operators of facilities subject to the requirements of EPCRA.

A person may represent one or more of the disciplines listed, provided they are duly appointed by each group or organization to be represented.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Iowa LEPC Handbook. November 6, 2013. Print.

11.3 Local Mutual Aid Agreements and Statewide Mutual Aid Compact

The Local Emergency Management Commissions, in collaboration with other public and private entities within this state, are required to develop mutual aid arrangements for reciprocal emergency services and recovery aid and assistance in case of disaster as needed. The chairperson of a commission, subject to the approval of the Governor, may enter into mutual aid arrangements with emergency management agencies or organizations in other states for reciprocal emergency services and recovery aid and assistance in case of disaster too great to be dealt with unassisted.⁵⁹

There are currently 36 Local and seven Regional LEPCs in Iowa as depicted in the map below:

Figure 17. Iowa Regional and Local Emergency Planning Committees



11.4 Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams

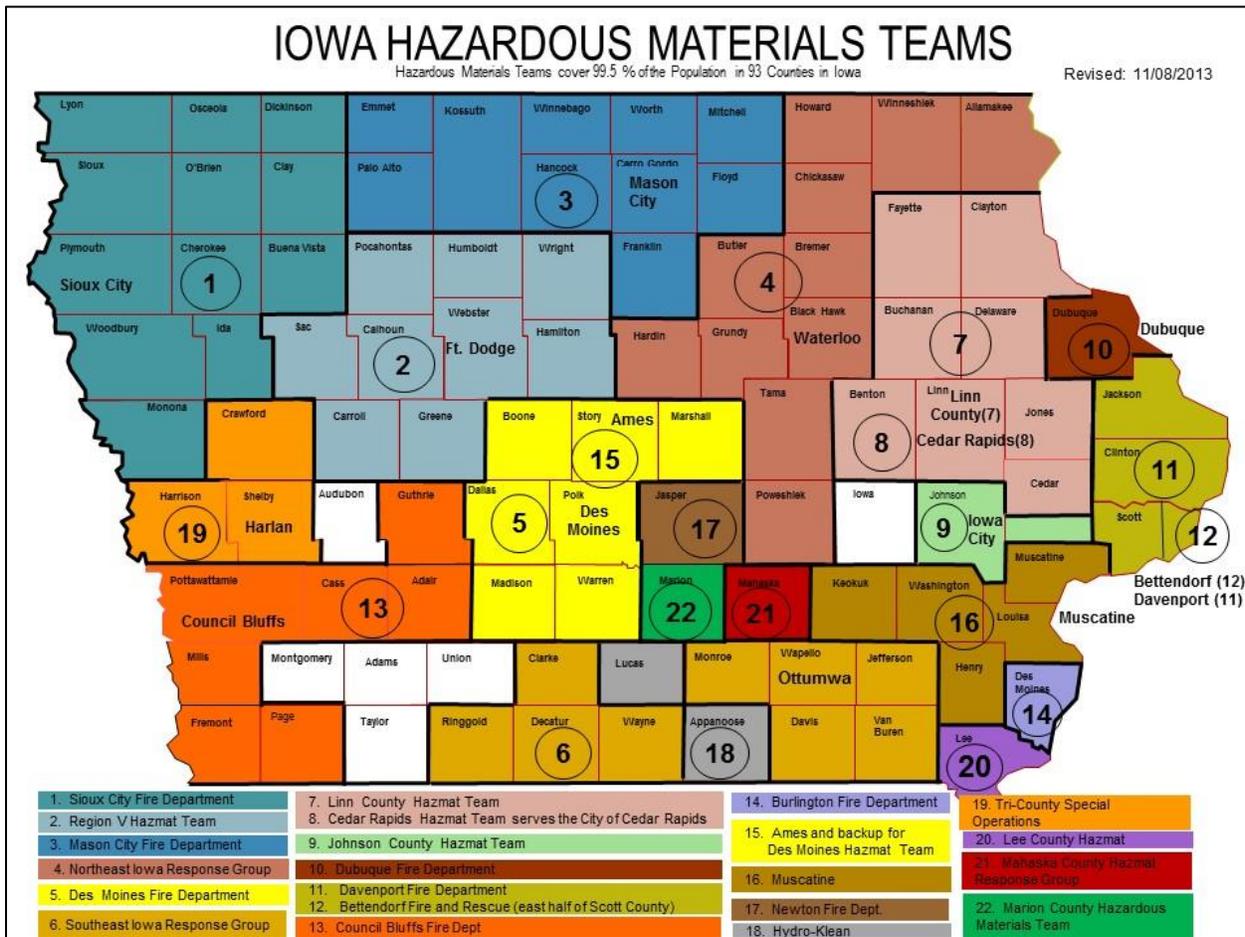
Iowa HSEMD does not operate, but supports regional hazardous materials response teams that are developed, managed, and maintained by local career fire departments in Iowa’s larger cities. These regional response teams provide subscription services, to surrounding counties, to support

⁵⁹ Iowa Code, Chapter 29C, *Emergency Management Security*. Print.

and augment hazardous materials response needs in those communities that do not have sufficient capabilities to manage an incident on their own.

There are currently 22 regional response teams that cover and provide services to 95 of the state's 99 counties. The teams provide hazardous materials response capabilities and training to local fire departments in their service areas. The regional teams respond to the areas found in Figure 18: *Iowa Hazardous Material Teams*.

Figure 18. Iowa Hazardous Materials Teams



Note: Iowa County recently joined to receive hazmat response team services from the Linn County team.

At the state level, Iowa HSEMD also supports Weapons of Mass Destruction/HazMat teams. Iowa's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/HazMat team was established to enhance the capabilities of existing fire department hazmat teams to provide statewide coverage for on-site testing and identifying, assessment and support for render-safe operations involving increasingly sophisticated improvised explosive devices and those that may contain chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) materials.

Fire department hazmat personnel from established departments in Council Bluffs, Davenport, and Des Moines make up the state's WMD HazMat team. These departments were chosen based on their existing hazmat capabilities.

11.5 Local Response Preparedness

The Study Team examined local preparedness via qualitative interviews and an online survey tool, which were used to gather information from Iowa’s local emergency managers and responders. The survey explored local risk perception, capabilities, and response preparedness. Emergency management coordinators and fire officials provided their insight through the interviews and surveys. The online survey was distributed through HSEMD to all local emergency management coordinators in the state, and 34 first responders and emergency managers responded by providing feedback; representing a reasonable sampling for survey results. Responses are summarized in Table 4 below. Complete individual responses can be found in Appendix H.

Table 4. General Preparedness and Response Capabilities

General Survey Question	Yes	No	I don't know
Risk			
Is your jurisdiction at risk from a crude oil/ethanol by rail transportation incident?	89.3%	3.6%	7.1%
Incident History			
Have you ever had any crude oil/ethanol by rail transportation incidents in your jurisdiction that required first responder operations?	14.3%	78.6%	7.1%
Interaction with Railroads			
Do you know how to contact the railroad(s) that crosses your community/county for assistance in an event?	96.4%	3.4%	0%
Have any railroads contacted you to offer training, planning, or exercises?	40.7%	55.6%	3.7%
Resource Support			
Have you ever provided aid or support to another jurisdiction for a crude oil/ethanol by rail transportation incident?	17.8%	78.6%	3.6%
Do you have mutual aid agreements?	88.9%	3.7%	7.4%
Are the mutual aid agreements written agreements?	81.5%	7.4%	11.1%
Response Capabilities			
Do you have hazardous materials response plans/SOPs/SOGs or other procedural documents in place?	78.6%	14.3%	7.1%
Have you conducted or participated in any exercise focused on a crude oil/ethanol by rail transportation incidents?	25.0%	75.0%	0%
Does your staff receive any specialized training to respond to crude oil/ethanol by rail transportation incidents?	21.5%	71.4%	7.1%
Do you conduct public education/outreach efforts related to general preparedness?	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Do you conduct public education/outreach efforts related to hazardous materials incidents?	53.6%	42.9%	3.5%
Do you conduct public education/outreach efforts related to crude oil/ethanol by rail transportation incidents?	3.6%	89.3%	7.1%
Do you have any identified emergency shelter facilities in your jurisdiction?	81.5%	11.1%	7.4%
Do you have the capability to manage a mass-casualty incident?	77.8%	7.4%	14.8%

Regarding communications with railroads in the state, the respondents provided the following information:

Table 5. Communication with Railroads

How would you characterize your familiarity with railroads in your jurisdiction?	
Regular contact	14.8%
We've talked in the past but I don't remember who I've talked to.	25.9%
I would have to look up my contacts	51.9%
My contact list may need to be updated	18.5%
I don't have any contacts with the railroads	7.4%

Note: Some respondents provided multiple responses to this question.

While most respondents stated that they have incident (and hazard) specific plans, many acknowledged through the interview process that their plans have not been updated to reflect changes in risk, vulnerability, and response operations related to crude oil and ethanol rail transportation. Twenty-five percent or less of the respondents are equipped with the specialized training, exercise, or actual incident response experience to manage a crude oil or ethanol by rail incident.

When asked about their capability to manage mass casualty incidents and thresholds for designating an incident, 20 percent stated that four or more patients would require a mass casualty response, while 40 percent would initiate a mass casualty incident with five patients and 45 percent would initiate a mass casualty incident with six or more patients. Note that the numbers equal 105 percent due to some individuals providing multiple responses to this question.

Almost all emergency responders interviewed stated that they have limited response capabilities or staffing for large-scale responses. In areas where volunteers serve as the primary response force, concerns were expressed about the availability of first responders due to paid work obligations.

Local firefighting foam capabilities were reported to be inadequate for large-scale spills in most rural areas. To augment foam supplies, many local first responders stated they rely on mutual aid, regional hazmat teams, nearby airports, and military installations. However, there are many types of foam, each serving a slightly different purpose, and each has a slightly different application procedure or tool. Municipal fire departments may not use the same types of foam as local airports and military installations, and may not have the training, tools, and skill sets to apply them all to properly extinguish fires or prevent ignition of released flammable liquids.

11.6 Training and Exercise

The Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau and HSEMD provide administrative and grant funding support for multiple hazardous materials training programs and courses including:

- Railroad-provided crude oil and ethanol by rail incident training programs like Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response (TRANSCAER) or other regional and on-site training programs;
- Local and regional training to first responders through the regional hazardous materials teams; and

- Specialized training programs at industry-specific training facilities across the country including the Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC) in Pueblo, Colorado and Texas A&M Extension Service (TEEX).

Interviews with local first responders revealed that while some local responders have received the specialized incident training for crude oil transportation through the rail companies, through SERTC, or through TEEX, others have received training through regional hazardous materials response teams, TRANSCAER, or other railroad-supplied training. The interviews also revealed that many first responders have had no specialized training and remain inadequately prepared to manage or mitigate a large incident. Training limitations were often attributed to local training availability, refresher training limitations, and limited in-state opportunities for hands-on training with flammable liquids.