



## Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordination – Who are the players and what do they do?

The National Response Center (NRC) is the federal government's national communications center, which is staffed 24 hours a day by U.S. Coast Guard officers and marine science technicians. EPA works with tribes on emergency preparedness and response issues through the National Response Team (NRT), Regional Response Teams (RRTs), Area Contingency Planning (ACPs), and tribal organizations.

### NRC

- The national point of contact for reporting all oil, chemical, radiological, and biological discharges into the environment, anywhere in the U.S. and its territories.
- NRC staff notify the EPA region assigned to the area of the incident and collect information on the:
  - size and nature of the release,
  - facility or vessel involved, and
  - party(ies) responsible for the release.
- The NRC maintains reports of all releases and spills in a national database.
- It notifies stakeholders that may be impacted by a discharge, including state, tribal and local governments.
- Tribes may also receive notifications through an NRC agreement.
  - Tribes with agreements receive spill notifications based on provided jurisdictional information and selected incident criteria contained in the agreement.
  - To apply for an NRC agreement, please email [nrc@uscg.mil](mailto:nrc@uscg.mil) or fax (202) 267-1322.

### NRT

- Comprised of the 16 federal agencies, each with responsibilities and expertise in various aspects of emergency response to pollution incidents.
- EPA chairs the NRT.
- With nationwide responsibilities for interagency planning, policy, and coordination, the NRT ensures that the most valuable tool in an emergency, readiness, is available for pollution incidents of all sizes and kinds.
- To learn more about federal agencies' roles and responsibilities during an emergency response, please see: <http://www.nrt.org/>.

### RRTs

- There are 13 RRTs in the U.S., each representing a particular geographic region (including the Caribbean and the Pacific Basin).
- RRTs are composed of representatives from field offices of the federal agencies that make up the NRT, as well as state representatives.
- Tribal Emergency Response Committees and Commissions (TERCs) are a part of the NRT/RRT.

- RRTs ensure that the multi-agency resources and expertise of the National Response System are available to support the On-Scene Coordinator (OSC), provided by EPA or the Coast Guard, as needed during a pollution incident.
- The four major responsibilities of RRTs are:
  - response,
  - planning,
  - training, and
  - coordination.
- For more information on RRTs, please see: <https://nrt.org/Site/Regionmap.aspx>

## ACPs

- An ACP is a reference document prepared for the use of all agencies engaged in responding to environmental emergencies within a defined geographic area;
- May also contain Sub-Area and Geographic Response Plans, which may have more limited scope than the ACP itself;
- Tribes can share their knowledge and concerns as part of the Sub-Area Committee; and
- Is a mechanism to ensure that all responders have access to essential area-specific information and promotes inter-agency of coordination to improve the effectiveness of responses.
- For more information on ACPs, please see: <https://www.epa.gov/oil-spills-prevention-and-preparedness-regulations/area-contingency-planning>

## Tribal Roles

Tribes play a role in emergency response by:

- Assisting in reporting incidents to the NRC and EPA when an oil spill or chemical release occurs in Indian Country.
- Being a vital member of the Unified Command.
- Providing critical access to impacted areas.
- Identifying areas of concern, using tribal ecological knowledge, such as hunting and fishing grounds.
- Having a Tribal ER Committee/Commission (TERCs) regardless of level of infrastructure/participation.

## Office of Emergency Management's Tribal Coordinator

William (Nick) Nichols

Email: [nichols.nick@epa.gov](mailto:nichols.nick@epa.gov)

Phone: 202-564-1970