



2009 US-Mexico Joint Response Team (JRT) Meeting **Sept. 1, 2009, South Padre Island, Texas**

The Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) National Planning and Preparedness Division (NPPD) along with EPA's Region 6, 9 in addition to OEM's Mexican counterparts, PROFEPA and Civil Protection, planned, organized and coordinated the 2009 JRT meeting, in South Padre Island, Texas on Tuesday, Sept. 1.

Annex II of the 1983 La Paz Agreement on Cooperation for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment in the Border Area established the U.S.-Mexico Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) to provide a bi-national coordination mechanism for protecting human health and the environment and responding to significant hazardous substances contingencies or emergencies that affect the inland border area between the U.S. and Mexico. The La Paz Agreement also established the JRT which has coordinating authorities for both Mexico and the U.S. For Mexico, the Co-chairs for the JCP and JRT are the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) through the Office of the Deputy Attorney of Industrial Inspection of the Federal Attorney General for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA) and the General Coordinator for Civil Protection, Secretariat of Government (SEGOB).

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) within the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the coordinating authority for the U.S. The JRT includes representatives from U.S. and Mexican federal, state, and local agencies responsible for emergency prevention, preparedness, and response in the Border Region.

During the Sept. 1, 2009 meeting, the attendance included not only the above representatives, but also members of industry, representing some of the local border maquiladoras, with a total number of over 100 attendees. EPA's Region 6 and 9 participated with NPPD in the planning and logistics for this successful and well received meeting, along with OEM's Mexican counterparts, PROFEPA and Civil Protection. Some of the agenda topics included discussions of on-going initiatives, recent accomplishments and lessons learned, recent planning, capacity building, training, exercises as well as the upcoming priorities and projects for 2009-2010 to enhance cross-border collaborations, increase preparedness and risk reduction.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Border-wide Workgroup Highlighted Accomplishments

Some of the most recent accomplishments of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Border-wide Workgroup that were highlighted at the meeting included:

- Finalizing the revision of the U.S.-Mexico Joint Contingency Plan (JCP);
- Signing and implementing fifteen bi-national local emergency response Sister City Plans;
- Finalizing the Tri-national Emergency Preparedness Plan (Sister City #16) with the Tohono O'odham Tribe, Arizona and Mexico;
- Completing several high-profile hazardous materials tabletop and field exercises;
- Conducting workshops through EPA Region 9's Baja California Training Institute;
- Coordinating the EPA and NorthCom Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) Knowledge Exchange Events;
- Working with vendors on addressing insurance issues, including coverage for federal government vehicles and U.S. first responders when crossing the Border;





- Establishing interagency coordination to facilitate Border crossings for federal responders and contractors and to provide more training and exchange of information.



US and Mexico's Border 2012 Emergency Preparedness and Response Co-Chairs attending the 2009 US-Mexico JRT meeting: Dana Tulis, Deputy Director for the EPA Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to the left of Mark Mjones, Director, National Planning and Preparedness Division, OEM, Ana Lucia Hill, General Director for the Office of Civil Protection, Secretariat of Government, Mexico and Gustavo G. González, Deputy Attorney for Industrial Inspection, PROFEPA, Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico.



Sergio H. Chávez, General, Departamento de Defensa de México, Dana Tulis, Deputy Director for EPA Office of Emergency Management, Susan Reinert, State Dept. rep. for NorthCom and Vice Admiral, Comandante del Sector Naval de Matamoros, México, Daniel Bozada Sánchez.

Some of the Border-wide Workgroup action items and initiatives that came out of the day-long JRT meeting included:

- Disseminate updated JCP in task force meetings and during training for binational exercises;
- Encourage sister cities to update local plans to be consistent with binational notification system of updated JCP;
- Finalize research on insurance coverage project: identify interested vendors via Blanket Purchase Agreement;
- Follow up with the City of El Paso insurance pilot project;
- Establish a criteria for future emergency response equipment distribution in sister cities with highest risk of chemical accidents/emergencies (EPA-NC MOU, PROFEPA & Protección Civil);





- Initiate public/private partnerships to initiate the establishment of an emergency training academy in Region VI and enhance Region IX's Baja CA training academy;
- Coordinate and prioritize equipment transfers to high risk areas;
- Coordinate with transportation sectors to better manage hazardous materials transfer cross the Border;
- Hold more tabletop exercises before the next JRT meeting, in an effort to increase communication on both sides of the Border and stay active;
- Add more hazardous materials training; and
- Review the need and viability of a bi-national center for emergency response.

