

## **Federal and State Disaster Coordination under ESF-10 and ESF 3: Lessons Learned from Hurricane Ike**

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Following Hurricane Ike (September 13, 2008), a hot wash identified several areas that needed improvement and better coordination relative to **Emergency Support Function (ESF) 3** (Public Works and Engineering) and **ESF-10** (Oil and Hazardous Materials Response). A work group of operational personnel was initially formed from two state agencies, and two federal agencies. They included the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas General Land Office (GLO), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 and the US Coast Guard (USCG) District Eight Strike Team and District Response Advisory Team (DRAT). The group held their first meeting on 27 April 2009, in Austin, and came to be called the **Natural Disaster Operational Workgroup**, or NDOW. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), have since joined the workgroup.

Over the next two years, the NDOW worked to address the needs identified in the hot wash, specifically...

- 1) One centralized data management system with agreed upon Data Quality Objectives. EPA's **Response Manager** is the centralized data management system to be utilized. Data Quality Objectives have been created by all agencies to utilize during a natural disaster event to fit all operational and reporting requirements. Standardized field data sheets have been created to utilize in the field during the assessment, response and closure process.
- 2) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and forms (Field Evaluation and Recovery Procedures), and an ICS form (214B) have been provided to all agencies and are available in hardcopy and in electronic format for laptops or PDA's.
- 3) Co-location and coordination of agencies pre-landfall at pre-selected locations.
- 4) Formalized data management training and software delivery for field personnel.
- 5) Pre-identified staging areas and waste collection pad sites.

Currently, seven SOPs have been finalized by the workgroup, and include Rapid Needs Assessment, Orphan Container Evaluation and Recovery, Oil Spill Assessment and Removal, and Drinking Water and Waste Water Evaluation. Four field data sheets have been finalized for field use. Since May 2010, four multi-day training sessions have been held in Corpus Christi, Houston, Port Arthur and Harlingen/Brownsville. Personnel from TCEQ, GLO and the USCG have been trained in EPA's Response Manager software, the SOPs and field data sheets.

The Eighth District United States Coast Guard directed that all USCG Sectors in Texas adopt and utilize this protocol for all future federally-declared disasters. EPA Region 6 Federal On-Scene Coordinator Nicolas Brescia led this effort from the beginning with support from START contractor Weston Solutions, Inc. EPA also contributed the use of their “Response Manager” software which is the foundation of the data collection and management system.

While this endeavor is relatively new, various aspects of it have been used in field-scale responses over the last three years, (Deep water Horizon, Hurricane Irene and Hurricane Sandy) and emergency responders in other regions are realizing its utility.

The NDOW has conducted regional training along the Texas coast the last three years prior to the start of Hurricane season. A full scale deployment drill was conducted on July 17-19, 2012 in Corpus Christi, Texas. The drill was a multi-agency Hurricane Field Exercise utilizing NDOW products. State and Federal Agencies participating included EPA, USCG, GLO, TCEQ and TPWD. An Incident Management Team was formed with three operational branches utilizing NDOW products and pre-designated staging areas.

Finally, if you would like to know more about this project, you can find it at <http://NDOW.net>

Also, all of the documents have been added to our **2012 Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning and Response Toolkit**.