

GUIDELINES FOR THE
PREPARATION OF A
TRANSPORT EMERGENCY
RESPONSE PLAN

Endorsed by ACTDG

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ISBN 0 642 45037 4

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INTRODUCTION

A Transport Emergency Response Plan (TERP) is required to meet the requirements of Regulation 14.5 of the Road Transport Reform (Dangerous Goods) Regulations (C'wlth) 1997 (the Regulations), and Rule 14.5 of the Rail (Dangerous Goods) Rules (the Rail Rules). A well constructed TERP could prevent a minor incident from becoming a disaster, save lives, prevent injuries, and minimise damage to property and the environment.

AIM

This guide is aimed at assisting in the preparation of a TERP, and is not meant to cover all the topics to be addressed in every conceivable planning situation, nor must all the topics covered in the guide be addressed in every TERP prepared. The document is what its title indicates – a guide – to be used as needed when preparing the plan.

OBJECTIVES OF A TRANSPORT EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

- To minimise any adverse effects on people, damage to property or harm to the environment in a transport emergency;
- To facilitate a rapid and effective emergency response and recovery;
- To provide assistance to emergency and security services; and
- To communicate vital information to all relevant persons involved in the transport emergency (both internal personnel and external agencies) with a minimum of delay.

PLANNING

A TERP prepares for the unexpected by identifying response mechanisms to a variety of potential crises arising from the transport of dangerous goods. It outlines the necessary resources, personnel, and logistics which allow for a prompt, coordinated, and rational approach to a transport incident. The plan must contain sufficient detail to enable those involved in the response to effectively carry out their duties. The plan should also take in to consideration requirements specified in 14.6 and 14.7 of the Regulations and Rail Rules.

Every plan should have a stated policy, purpose, and organisational structure, geographic scope, and contain details of the classes of dangerous goods and mode of transport.

A finished plan does not ensure readiness. Continual appraisal using table-top and simulation exercises, plus regular updating of equipment, contact lists, and training of personnel will improve the capability to successfully respond to transport emergency situations. Liaison with emergency and, where relevant, security services in the planning phase is a critical element in the development of the plan. This may include communication with emergency and/or security services along the transport route.

PLAN ELEMENTS

The following elements should be considered when preparing a Transport Emergency Response Plan. They are grouped under four major headings: PLAN ACTIVATION, RESPONSE TASKS, RESOURCES, and PREPAREDNESS.

I PLAN ACTIVATION

1. INTERNAL ALERTING MECHANISM

The plan should describe how transport emergency calls are processed within the organisation and how appropriate response personnel in a position of authority will activate and implement the plan. (This section should be brief, one page or less, easily found on the cover or first page of the plan, and be simple so as to minimise the number of calls to be made.)

2. SITUATION APPRAISAL

A checklist should be developed for recording essential information about the incident to facilitate decision making; date, time, location, nature of the incident, likely or possible causes of the incident (such as collision with another vehicle or object, equipment failure, sabotage or attack), injuries, type of container involved, placard, label, and manifest details, weather conditions, terrain, personnel on site, amounts of dangerous goods and other materials involved, etc. Answers to some questions may be unknown, but a comprehensive checklist will assist in gathering as much information as possible during the initial call.

The situation appraisal will define the critical issues at hand, allow the plan activators to set priorities regarding preventative and corrective strategies, and choose the response required to protect lives, property, and the environment in an effective manner.

3. **AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES MOBILISATION**

The plan should identify specific positions within an organisation (preferably by name) and their scope of authority. These could include the person in charge within the organisation, the chain of command, technical and medical advisors and their areas of expertise, on-scene authority for organisation, spokesperson(s) including public relations and media person, who will be responsible for requesting outside assistance.

II. **RESPONSE TASKS**

1. **EXTERNAL ALERTING MECHANISM**

The plan must describe how and when the organisation will alert external parties such as emergency services, fire authorities, police, security services, environment protection authorities, competent authorities, road authorities and outside contractors.

2. **EMERGENCY ACTION / CONTAINMENT / CLEANUP**

Appropriate measures should be described for each material to be handled in a manner which will minimise danger and the impact on the environment including initial emergency action, containment, recovery and cleanup. The location, capability, and limitations of equipment to be used should be described.

III. **RESOURCES**

1. **CONTACT LIST**

The plan should contain an accurate, up-to-date telephone roster for emergencies which may include individuals within the organisation, regulatory contacts, containment and cleanup equipment contractors, technical specialists, public health and environment protection authorities including alternates and respective telephone / facsimile numbers. (The contact list may be included as an annex to the TERP to facilitate updating.)

2. **COMMUNICATIONS**

The plan should describe the communication network to be used and provide clear operational procedures for the use of mobile phones, radios and other communication devices.

3. **LOGISTIC SUPPORT**

The plan should describe the movement of people and equipment to and from the emergency site. This becomes an important aspect if the transport incident occurs in a remote location.

4. **EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS**

An inventory of emergency response equipment, a detailed list of specific resources and items of equipment available from within the organisation, and externally, should be maintained. If outside contractors are to be utilised, the personnel and equipment and their expertise and capabilities should be evaluated in advance.

5. **PERSONNEL**

The plan should designate response personnel, and describe their duties. Each person must be fully aware of his or her role.

6. **MEDIA**

The press will often be present at an emergency. A designated media contact will serve to assist in relaying important information between the organisation and the media.

IV. **PREPAREDNESS**

1. **HAZARD ANALYSIS AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

Multiple plans may be required depending on a hazard analysis of possible scenarios.

2. **TRAINING**

Training should provide the capability for rapid and competent response, vital to success in an emergency situation. An emergency situation often provides an unfamiliar, emotional and hostile working environment for the responders. Anyone with little training or experience will have difficulty dealing effectively with the incident. All personnel who have an active role in the plan must be trained in the key aspects of the plan.

3. **EXERCISES**

Table-top and simulation exercises allow the plan to be scrutinised under conditions which approximate an actual incident. Assessment can be done in stages whereby one specific aspect of the plan is evaluated at a time. After each stage has been reviewed, a full scale scenario can be introduced. Having completed “in-house” full scale incident scenarios, interaction with external agencies such as consignors, prime contractors and the emergency services can be beneficial in evaluating the overall plan.

4. **MAINTENANCE OF RESPONSE EQUIPMENT**

The plan should show schedules for preventative maintenance of relevant equipment listed in the plan. The plan should also show the system by which the maintenance schedules are met.

5. **INVESTIGATIVE FOLLOW UP**

When an organisation has dealt with an incident, the overall response should be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the plan. The TERP should then be updated and modified as necessary.

6. **UPDATING**

A nominated individual should be responsible for updating the plan (including contact telephone numbers) and informing all plan holders of any changes. This is particularly important where information gathering / situation appraisal is carried out by an external contracted emergency response provider. A record of plan amendments should be maintained. The plan should be updated at least annually.

7. **PLAN AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION**

The plan should include a listing of all recipients, their names, addresses and title. All staff who have responsibilities within the emergency plan should have access to the plan.
