

# REGION 6 LEPC Update



Volume 22, No. 10  
November, 2009

Steve Mason, EPA Region 6  
E-Mail: [mason.steve@epa.gov](mailto:mason.steve@epa.gov)

Angie Rothen, Weston Solutions  
E-Mail: [angie.rothen@westonsolutions.com](mailto:angie.rothen@westonsolutions.com)

This month, we provide a reminder summary of Joint Information Centers (JIC), as well as informative suggestions from Fred Cowie, our adopted Poet Laureate.

In addition, we have attached the accidental release report for Region 6 for FY2009, which has loads of useful information for planning purposes.

As always, if you received this Update from someone else, and would like to be added to the email list, just email us at one of the emails above.

Steve & Angie

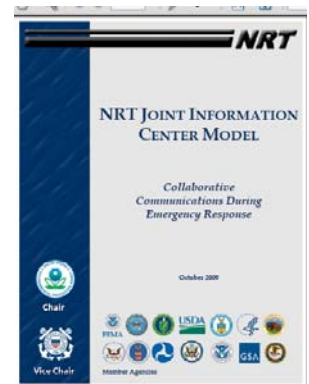
## ***Now Available: the National Response Team (NRT) Joint Information Center (JIC) Model***

The NRT Joint Information Center (JIC) Model explains what a JIC is and why a JIC is established. It outlines the structure, processes, functional positions and roles and responsibilities of JIC personnel.

This document is intended for field use. Also included in the document are a series of appendices that are designed to provide additional reference materials and tools that can support a JIC operation.

The NRT JIC Model is now available on the NRT Website under "Guidance, Technical Assistance & Planning".

[www.nrt.org/production/NRT/NRTWeb.nsf/PagesByLevelCat/Level2NRTJICModel?Opendocument](http://www.nrt.org/production/NRT/NRTWeb.nsf/PagesByLevelCat/Level2NRTJICModel?Opendocument)



### Region 6 LEPC Coordinators

Arkansas	Kenny Harmon	501-683-6700	<a href="mailto:kenny.harmon@adem.arkansas.gov">kenny.harmon@adem.arkansas.gov</a>
Louisiana	Gene Dunegan	225-925-6113	<a href="mailto:gene.dunegan@dps.la.gov">gene.dunegan@dps.la.gov</a>
New Mexico	Lee Shin	505-476-0618	<a href="mailto:lee.shin@state.nm.us">lee.shin@state.nm.us</a>
Oklahoma	Tom Bergman Bonnie McKelvey	405-702-1013 405-521-2481	<a href="mailto:tom.bergman@deq.ok.gov">tom.bergman@deq.ok.gov</a> <a href="mailto:bonnie.mckelvey@oem.ok.gov">bonnie.mckelvey@oem.ok.gov</a>
Texas	Bernardine Zimmerman Wade Parks	800-452-2791 512-424-5677	<a href="mailto:Bernardine.zimmerman@dshs.state.tx.us">Bernardine.zimmerman@dshs.state.tx.us</a> <a href="mailto:wade.parks@txdps.state.tx.us">wade.parks@txdps.state.tx.us</a>

# Basic Information on Joint Information Centers

## Joint Information System (JIS)

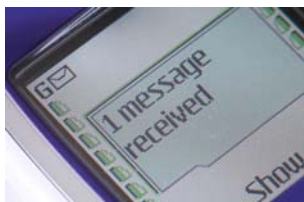
The JIS provides the mechanism to organize, integrate, and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines, including the private sector and NGOs.

It includes the plans, protocols, procedures, and structures used to provide information to:

- general public;
- disaster victims;
- affected jurisdictions;
- elected officials;
- community leaders;
- private sector;
- media;
- NGOs (e.g., American Red Cross);
- response and recovery organizations (e.g., urban search and rescue, utilities);
- volunteer groups (e.g., CERT, VOAD);
- international interests (e.g., international media and donations); and
- other impacted groups.



Federal, State, tribal, local, and voluntary agencies, private sector PIOs, and established JICs are critical supporting elements of the JIS. Key elements include the following:



- gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating consistent messages;
- interagency coordination and integration;
- support for decision-makers; and
- flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

Agencies issue their own releases related to their policies, procedures, programs, and capabilities; however, messages need to be coordinated utilizing the JIS to ensure message consistency.

## Joint Information Centers (JICs)

To ensure coordination of public information during incidents that involve multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, the IC/UC may use a JIC to support the gathering, verification, coordination, and dissemination of accurate, accessible, and timely information.

The JIC is a central location that facilitates operation of the JIS.

In the early stages of response to an incident, the PIO shall consult with the IC/UC regarding the opening of a JIC. The IC/UC shall retain authority to order the opening of a JIC, although the lead PIO may recommend when it is appropriate.

The JIC is a central location to facilitate operation of the JIS during and after an incident. The JIC enhances information coordination, reduces misinformation, and maximizes resources by collocating Public Information Officers (PIOs) as much as possible.



The JIC isn't the same as the JIS and doesn't replace the JIS. The JIS is a way of operating; the JIC is one location where the operation takes place.

JICs are established:

- at the direction of the IC/UC at various levels of government;
- at pre-determined or incident-specific sites; and
- as components of Federal, State, tribal, or local Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS).

JICs may be staffed:

- by representatives from all agencies and jurisdictions involved in the response and recovery operation; and
- through intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements such as EMAC.

EMAC could be a supplemental source or vehicle for bringing trained personnel together to support a JIC.

The JIC should be located close to the best sources of information, such as an EOC, without compromising safety or security of the personnel staffing the facility. A single JIC location is preferable, but the system is flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate virtual or multiple JIC locations, as required.

### Types of Joint Information Centers (JICs)

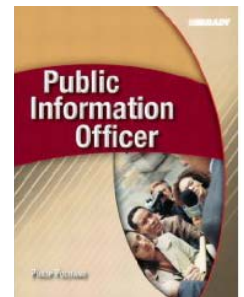
Incident	Typically, an incident specific JIC is established at a single, on scene location in coordination with Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies or at the national level, if the situation warrants. It provides easy media access, which is paramount to success. This is a typical JIC.
Virtual	A virtual JIC is established when a physical co-location is not feasible. It connects PIOs through e-mail, cell/ land-line phones, faxes, video teleconferencing, web-based information systems, etc. For a pandemic incident where PIOs at different locations communicate and coordinate public information electronically, it may be appropriate to establish a virtual JIC.
Satellite	A satellite JIC is smaller in scale than other JICs. It is established primarily to support the incident JIC and to operate under their direction. These are subordinate JICs, which are typically located closer to the scene.
Area	An area JIC supports multiple-incident ICS structures that are spread over a wide geographic area. It is typically located near the largest media market and can be established on a local, State, or multi-state basis. Multiple States experiencing storm damage may participate in an area JIC.
Support	A support JIC is established to supplement the efforts of several Incident JICs in multiple States. It offers additional staff and resources outside of the disaster area.
National	A national JIC is established when an incident requires Federal coordination and is expected to be of long duration (weeks or months) or when the incident affects a large area of the country. A national JIC is staffed by numerous Federal departments and/or agencies.

### Common Roles And Functions

The following roles and functions are common components of a JIC.

Lead PIO:

- responsible for managing the JIC;
- serves as advisor to IC/UC;
- provides overall communication policy direction;
- recommends and develops strategy for messages, briefings, and news releases;
- obtains approval from those in authority before releases are made; and
- conducts JIS/JIC briefings (live or virtual) to update staff regarding Incident Command activities.



Information Gathering:

- Response Partners - Coordination with supporting response agencies and their PIOs at EOCs, incident command posts, and other locations to gather information on the incident.
- Media Monitoring Analysis/Rapid Response - Entails reviewing media reports for accuracy, content, and possible response.
- Research and Writing:
  - Products - Writing materials such as media releases, fact sheets, flyers, etc.
  - Graphics Support - Entails designing layouts, developing PowerPoint presentations, and creating graphics for a range of materials (e.g., newsletters, flyers, etc.).



- Audio-Visual:
  - Broadcast Operations - Entails developing video documentation, special productions, remote live interview feeds, and logistical support of public meetings and presentations.
  - Photo Video - Entails providing still photography documentation to support print and internet media needs, and video documentation to support broadcast media needs. Also includes collecting materials for agency archives.

**Information Dissemination:**

- Briefing/Special Events - Entails handling events such as news conferences, media briefings, VIP visits, and tours for senior officials of affected areas.
- Media Relations:
  - News Desk - Serves as the primary point of contact for the media.
  - Spokesperson - Prepares and conducts regular news briefings and conferences.
- Web Support - Entails creating and maintaining web pages and blogs containing information about the incident for use by the public and the media.
- Public Inquiries - Entails responding to questions from citizens, making referrals, and developing a log of telephone calls, e-mails, etc., containing names, addresses, the type of calls, and any necessary follow up actions.

**Operations Support:**

- Special Needs/Multilingual - Entails providing language translation and other services to ensure appropriate and timely information reaches those in the affected areas with special needs.
- Facility Support - Coordinates with the JIC Facility Liaison to maintain and support the JIC operations concerning the facility and resources.

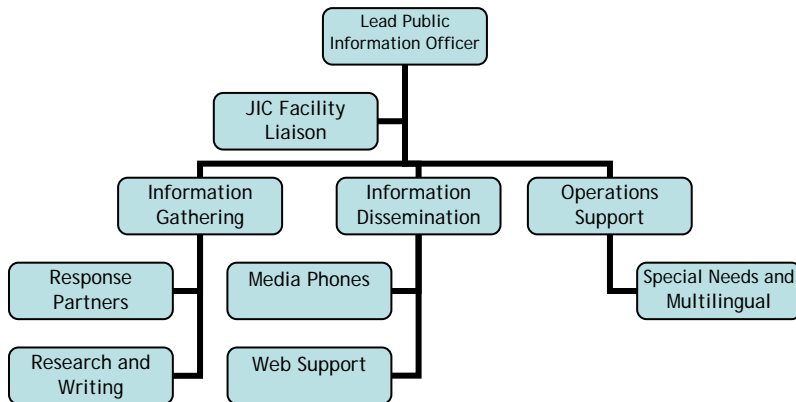


**Liaison:**

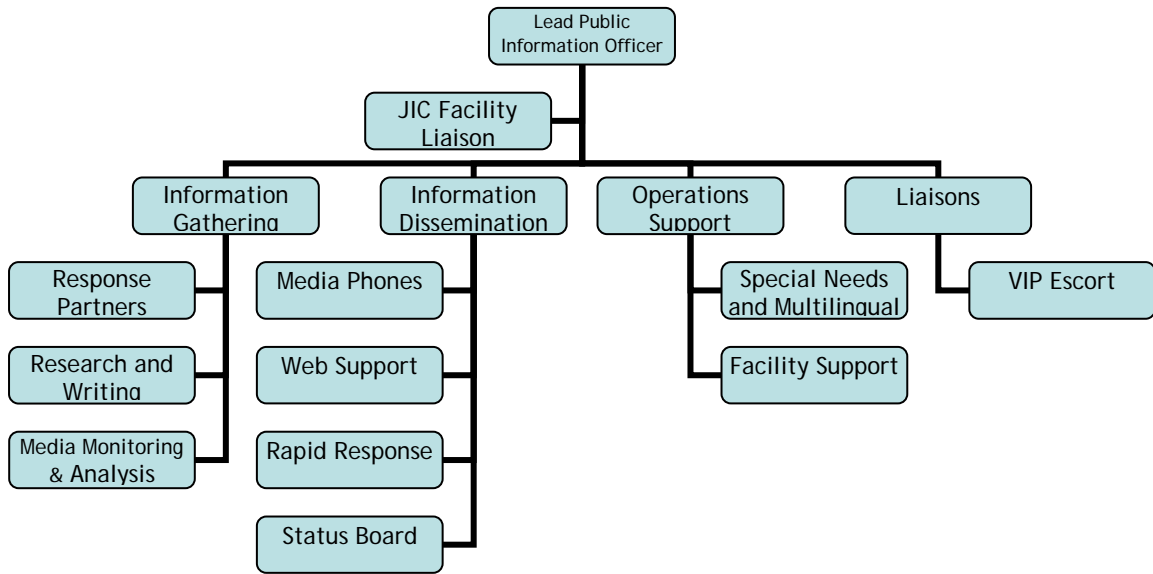
Provides a coordinated two-way communication link with key program areas and other entities involved in the response and recovery operation (e.g., elected officials, community leaders, VIPs, and other governmental and NGO support agencies).

The following diagrams are examples of what JIC organizations look like at various stages of an escalating incident. They are scalable and flexible; certain functions may not be needed for every type of incident or planned event. Each box represents a function to be performed. One person may do many functions, or one function may be staffed by many people, depending upon the scope of the incident.

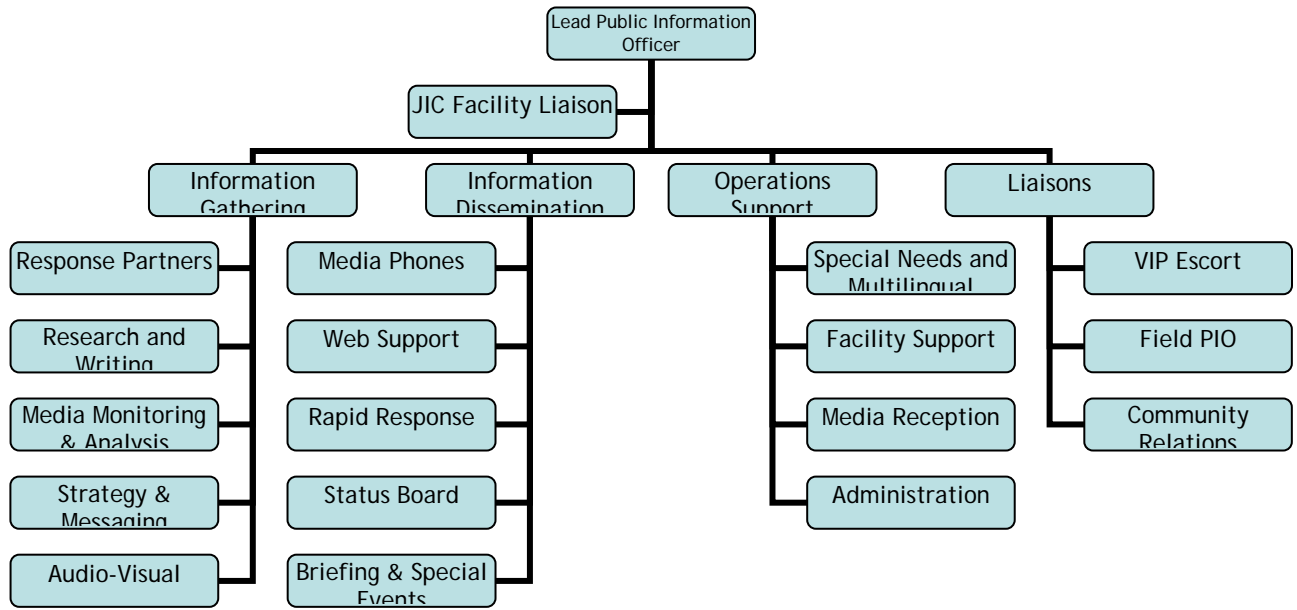
**Initial Response**



## Escalating Incidents



## Large Scale Incidents

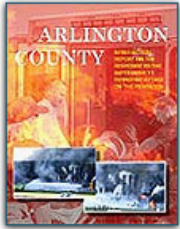


## Demobilizing The Joint Information Center (JIC)

When operational activities begin to decline, public information functions will be transferred back to responsible jurisdictions and agencies. The decision to transition will be made by the IC/UC in consultation with the lead PIO and other Section Chiefs.

Below are the major steps the PIO would take in deactivating a JIC:

- prepare a comprehensive deactivation news release for lead-agency headquarters approval and distribution;
- notify community, media, agency communications managers and local officials about closing and provide regional contact information;
- provide casebooks to communication managers whose organizations will assume responsibility for ongoing information;
- complete an after-action report and participate in evaluation discussions;
- return borrowed equipment and supplies;
- inventory equipment and supplies; and
- replenish "Go Kits" as necessary.



#### Lessons Learned: Importance of Joint Information Centers

After the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon, the Federal Bureau of Investigation chose not to activate a JIC.

The Arlington County After-Action Report states, "The failure to establish a JIC proved to be an impediment to the presentation of coordinated, factual, and timely public information."

#### Lessons Learned: Southern California Firestorm 2003

The following findings are from a study commissioned for the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center:

- Where a JIC was established, it had a positive effect on the timeliness and quality of the information campaign.
- These incidents received international attention and the need for an information campaign reached a threshold much larger than any one agency could manage effectively. The JIC combined the people and unique strengths of different agencies' public affairs staffs.
- The JIC allowed a unified message to be presented to the public and the media. The JIC could communicate key fire management issues (e.g., the use of air tankers, the need for defensible space) and address these issues proactively through public information while fires held the public's attention.



#### JIC Characteristics

NIMS describes the following characteristics of a JIC:



- JICs may be established at each level of incident management—local, State, regional, national—as required.
- The JIC includes representatives of each jurisdiction, agency, private-sector entity, and nongovernmental organization involved in incident management activities.
- While collocating PIOs in a single location is ideal, the response system should accommodate multiple JIC locations when circumstances of the incident require. For example, multiple JICs may be needed for multiple, related incidents or a single, complex incident spanning a wide geographic area or multiple jurisdictions. In other words, every EOC has a JIC.
- Each JIC must have procedures and protocols to communicate and coordinate effectively with other JICs, as well as with other appropriate components of Incident Command.



## Benefits of the JIC

Establishing a JIC as part of incident response offers the following benefits:

- A central working facility where PIOs can gather. Whether it is a small office, the corner of a command center, or a pre-established facility with multiple phone lines, computers, and media-monitoring resources, a JIC makes coordination easier by bringing PIOs together.
- Pooled resources. A JIC offers more access to resources than possible in the field using a go kit.



## More Benefits of the JIC

Other benefits of establishing a JIC include the following:



- Strength in numbers. When more PIOs are working together there is a greater opportunity to make use of individual PIO talents. PIOs can focus attention on specific activities, rather than having to "do it all."
- Safety. Working out of a JIC provides a measure of safety not afforded to PIOs working alone in the field. The JIC is also a central location for families and others to check in and make contact with PIOs working the incident.
- Recognized source. The JIC is the recognized source for the news media to get official information.

Establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC) under the Incident Command System is the most effective means of meeting CFR requirements and can make the difference between the public perceiving your incident to be under control or out of control.

The advantages of a JIC is a coordinated release of information from a variety of sources. It minimizes conflicting information, maximizes public information resources and meets the need of the media.

The JIC can provide news briefings and conferences, written statements (factsheets, releases etc), qualified and informed spokespeople and answers to the public and media.

Essentially, the JIC can be the one-stop shop for official government information during and emergency or disaster.



## ***EPA Region 6 Accidental Release Information : 1982 – 2009 Over 25 Years of Data***

In the attached file with this email is information on our Accidental Release Information for FY2009. This report encompasses release reports to the National Response Center, directed to EPA Region 6.

The full report contains information that can be useful to LEPCs in their planning process. It incorporates various data elements on more than 113,000 spill reports received by EPA Region 6 from 1982 - 2009.

The two most important data elements include:

- Statistically, there is a shelter-in-place or evacuation somewhere in Region 6 on a weekly basis.
- The time from when a release occurs to when it is reported has been reduced dramatically over the past 25 years. This means that the spill information is reaching agency personnel at all levels (local, state, federal) faster, so that quicker response actions can be determined and implemented.

# An Emergency Exercise as Training and Practice

© 2009 Frederick J. Cowie, Ph.D. [fredcowie@aol.com](mailto:fredcowie@aol.com) fredcowie.com 406-431-3531

This newsletter article is the final one in a handful of recent articles about local emergency management, true preparedness, and realistic exercises. In these few pages I have attempted to keep local emergency management realistic in a age when international terrorism has far too often moved the emphasis from the local stage to the theater of the bizarre, if not the absurd. While not wanting to seem unpatriotic, I think it is crucial and critical that we return the emphasis to 9-1-1, remembering that it is the everyday skills that allow us to cope with 9/11.



Fifteen years ago, when I opted out of the state emergency management training team that taught the national Exercise Design Course, I was asked why, when my evaluations were so good. I still stand by my rationale, "Because while our course evaluations are great, real behavior isn't changing. They aren't becoming better emergency managers, better designers of exercises, they're just enjoying a meaningless course taught by good trainers."



In effect, we were training them to design exercises for paramilitary organizations, ones where everyone wears the same uniform, has a badge, and there's somewhat of a strict discipline, a chain of command with rank having privileges.

This was business as usual, since our managers were ex-military and we were still working under the old Department of Defense format. But, there is an honest reality at the county level—where facts trump institutional theory and federal mandates—and that reality demands that we as trainers honor local truths.

All incidents are local. All volunteers demand our understanding of local realities. And local teams aren't para-military, quasi-military, ex-military, and sure aren't full-time, fully-funded, and over-equipped military. With that said, in many ways in many newsletter articles over the last two decades, I have just one more insight to pass on, one which emerged when putting together a series of talks for conferences on child abuse, hospital preparedness, and local county emergency management.

Emergency manager trainers have often and long preached that a county emergency plan should take the generic functions, such as evacuation, and give them each their own chapter, and then apply those functional activities when needed, to specific incidents such as wildland fires, hazardous materials incidents, or flash or riverine flooding.

USDOT has applied the same generic training and response principle to hazardous materials, giving us the great tools we know as hazard classes and the numeric response guides.



But, as adult learners, we don't like generics very well. Invariably, we want reality.

Soon, we want specifics. We learn though what in academia are call practicums (really, practica?). From internships. Having evolved from a academic to a realist, from a professor who had "years to change their minds" to a trainer who has "hours to change their behavior," while writing this last series of articles on local and rural response, and contemplating things learned while talking to copper and gold mine health and safety personnel, something clicked.

I have always pushed locals to emphasize two things first, exercises designed solely by the responders from the participating agencies, industries and organizations. Bottom up. Ground up.

55-gallon drum up; and second, EAPs, specific Emergency Action Plans, site-specific, chemical-specific, and company-specific response plans to supplement generic Standard Operating Procedures and generic Hazmat Plans. Reality, reality, reality. Location, location, location.



Then recently in a moment of enlightenment, like Buddha under the bodhi tree, I saw it all clearly—these concepts need to be integrated!

Putting together agency EAPs for specific, critical sites, is like designing agency drills.

Combining individual response agency EAPs into community response team coordinated and integrated group-EAPs [for instance, what are we going to do as a group at an HF release at the refinery] is nothing more than exercise design.

Our's, and all levels of government, historical and understandable emphasis on generic, functional emergency management plans and the concomitant generic, functional exercises has unfortunately under- and de-emphasized the critical basis of good training, reality!

The recent movement, in this century, of our focus away from local hazards and risks to international terrorism has done nothing but reinforce the unreality of both our current planning and and our exercising routines.



Reality begins at home. With the local mine, the local co-op, the local plating shop, the local hospital, the local VFD, the local Sheriff Office, the local ambulance garage.

If, as trainers, we want to be taken seriously, we have to look around our towns, our neighborhoods. We have ground ourselves. We have to bring back those EAPs.

We have no choice in the matter, if we want to honor the time, effort, money and emotion our local teams are investing in coming to our classes.

After all, as Dorothy once said, "there's no place like home!"

**HAS YOUR LEPC:**



- Established a permanent address for facilities, the SERC, and EPA to mail required forms and information;
- Notified the SERC of any changes to the LEPC structure, especially a change in the chair or address;
- Provided EPCRA training to emergency responders, specifically local fire departments who often can provide information to facilities during fire inspections and police departments who respond to haz-mat incidents?
- Established a 24-hour manned emergency phone number (i.e., sheriff's office, 911, fire department) for facilities to make release notifications -- an answering machine is not sufficient

- The articles contained herein are provided for general purposes only.
- EPA does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions or results of any actions based upon this information.
- Please consult the applicable regulations when determining compliance.
- Mention of trade names, products, or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying official EPA approval, endorsement, or recommendation.

**Region 6 Emergency Notification Numbers**

Arkansas Dept. of Emergency Management	800-322-4012
Louisiana State Police	877-925-6595
New Mexico State Police	505-827-9126
Oklahoma Dept. of Environmental Quality	800-522-0206
Texas Environmental Hotline	800-832-8224
*****	
National Response Center	800-424-8802
EPA Region 6	866-372-7745
CHEMTREC	800-424-9300