

Somerset County Emergency Operations Plan

ATTACHMENT F - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

I. NATURE OF THE HAZARD

The most likely technological hazard to occur in Somerset County that would rapidly overwhelm municipal resources would be a incident involving Hazardous Materials. Hazardous materials are defined as explosive, flammable, combustible, corrosive, oxidizing, toxic, infectious, or radioactive materials that, when involved in an accident and released in sufficient quantities, put some portion of the general public in immediate danger from exposure, contact, inhalation, or ingestion.

Even though there are currently four Extremely Hazardous Substance (EHS) reporting facilities within Somerset County, this does not reflect the other 43 Chemical Hazardous Material reporting facilities and the enormous numbers of hazardous material vehicles by rubber and rail that enter, traverse, and then leave the county, in route to other facilities in and outside of the State of Maine. Somerset County has an unusually high incident rate of reoccurring truck transport accidents, resulting in Hazardous Material Response. Many times these responses occur on the major vehicle and rail routes indicated, as well as adjacent to the major water tributaries.

The Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS) materials present in Somerset County are Anhydrous Ammonia, Endosulfan, Sulfuric Acid, Atrazine, Paraquat, and Sodium Hypochlorite. These chemicals are primarily corrosive gases and liquids that will not travel far from their containers unless in gaseous form. The primary damage will be from inhalation of the EHS for people caught in the downwind cloud plume.

Although considered in the Somerset County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, hazardous material incidents were not rated and profiled, hazardous material incidents are increasing at an alarming rate in the county.

II. RISK AREAS

All major vehicle routes are subject to transportation of hazardous materials and waste products, to and from many facilities within and from outside the county that supports the industrial and business hub of Somerset County. This hub is located predominately in the southern section of the county, mainly in seven communities: Anson, Fairfield, Hartland, Madison, Norridgewock, Pittsfield and Skowhegan. The two major waterways (the Kennebec and Sebasticook) also flow through the seven major communities, posing significant flood threats during the transition of the seasons from winter to spring with rapid snow melt and spring run off.

III. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

As stated in the Basic Plan and Annex A, the NIMS-version of the Incident Command System (ICS) will be used for all County command and control operations. In accordance with SARA Title III, each municipality will designate a community emergency coordinator who shall make determinations necessary to implement the plan. In most communities, these responsibilities will be given to the Fire Chief/Incident Commander.

The Somerset County RCC will receive calls, elicit information, dispatch first responders, relay information to first responders prior to their arrival on scene, and make notifications.

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First responders will make an initial assessment when they arrive on scene. The senior responder will assume Incident Command, establish an Incident Command Post in an area that is outside the Hot and Warm zones and warn others of these hazards. First responders in Waldo County are trained in HazMat Awareness and will identify the hazardous material. First responders will perform any obvious rescues as incident permits without putting themselves in severe danger. Incident Command must notify the local hospital that will be receiving the victims exposed to possible hazardous materials.

Only one of the municipal fire departments in Somerset County has a Hazardous Materials/WMD Response Team. Municipal fire departments that arrive on the scene of a HazMat incident will take awareness-level actions only - identify report, evacuate, and secure the incident scene. The Incident Commander will contact the Somerset County EMA, with assistance from the RCC, in order to request regional HazMat Response Teams from outside the County and from the State. The County EMA office will contact the Maine Emergency Management Agency and request additional HazMat response resources be deployed to the incident.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

In the event of a HazMat incident, rapid communication is important to ensure a prompt and coordinated response. Communications must be maintained between the Somerset County RCC, the first responders, the hospital emergency rooms, and the municipal and County EOCs.

First responders will rely primarily on radio communications, augmented by cellular phones. The County and municipal EOCs will communicate with the responders by radio and with other each other and other agencies by phone.

All radio communication traffic will be managed by the County RCC. The Incident Commander, with assistance from the municipal or County EOC will establish communications and frequency protocols and assignments to reduce confusion on the radios.

V. WARNING

There will be no warning prior to the accidental release of a hazardous material. The facility manager, transporter, or first responders will be the first on scene who have the capability to identify the incident as involving hazardous materials. The facility manager or incident commander must notify and warn the Somerset County RCC of the incident specifics so that other responders and emergency managers may take appropriate actions.

For HazMat incidents, public warning may be accomplished door-to-door or through mobile or portable public address systems by on-scene personnel under the direction of the IC. Public warning may be accomplished by the municipal or County EOCs by contacting local television and radio stations and requesting that emergency information be transmitted.

The Somerset County EMA will notify the Maine State Police and the Maine EMA of the incident specifics as soon as possible.

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VI. EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

The flow of accurate and timely emergency information is critical to the protection of lives and property immediately following a HAZMAT release.

The news media will be the public's primary source of information, from both official and other sources, over the course of the emergency. The Somerset County EOC Public Information Officer will immediately establish a Media Center and contact the local television and radio stations. Information to safeguard the public from the current hazard will be made available for transmission to the public.

The Public Information Officer will:

1. Inform the public of health hazards associated with the HazMat incident.
2. Provide personal protective actions instructions, including sheltering-in-place.
3. Event-specific evacuation instructions and information (road closures, available transportation)

VII. EVACUATION

Evacuation may be required from inside the perimeter of the scene to guard against further casualties from contamination by the hazardous material. Evacuations will be authorized and initiated by the Incident Commander. The IC must coordinate with the other communities and counties that may be impacted by the evacuation.

The Incident Commander will establish a Protective Action Zone, if necessary. This is an area in which people can be assumed to be at risk of harmful exposure, and in need of either in-place protective shelter or evacuation.

VIII. SHELTERING IN PLACE

Temporary in-place sheltering may be appropriate if there is a short-duration release of hazardous materials or if it is determined to be safer for individuals to remain in place. Sheltering in place is when people make a shelter out of the place they are in. It is a way for people to make the building as safe as possible to protect themselves until help arrives.

The goal of sheltering in place during HazMat events is to minimize the exposure of the threatened public to the dangerous substances. Sheltering in place uses a structure and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate people from a hazardous outdoor atmosphere. The people will still be in the endangered area, but will be protected by the barrier created by the shelter and the short-term protection of its indoor atmosphere. Over time, small cracks in buildings will allow contaminated air to enter the indoor atmosphere. Some exposure will occur, but if properly undertaken, sheltering in place can provide substantial protection from doses high enough to cause injury. The selection of sheltering in place to protect the public may be preferable when the leak is very fast, a migrating toxic vapor cloud could quickly overtake unprotected or evacuating citizens, the material released has a low health hazard, or evacuation would create problems that would outweigh its usefulness.

Sheltering in place will be authorized and initiated by Incident Commanders, municipal or County officers, or municipal or County emergency management directors. Directions to the public to shelter in place will be accomplished by using the Emergency Alert System as described in Annex C.

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IX. HEALTH AND MEDICAL

Issues that may be different during a hazmat incident include decontamination, safety of victims and responders, and in place sheltering versus evacuation. Local hospital and EMS personnel should anticipate the need to handle large numbers of people who may or may not be contaminated but who are fearful about their medical well-being.

The Incident Commander will need to identify locations for setup of decontamination stations and for mobile triage support. .

X. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Local and State Hazardous Materials Response resources:

Somerset County is part of the Central Maine WMD/HAZMAT Response Team with Strike Team 9 located at Skowhegan Fire Department,

Regional Decontamination Strike Teams – There are eight municipal fire departments in the State of Maine that maintain Decontamination Strike Teams. These are the municipalities of Ogunquit, South Portland, Paris/Norway, Augusta, Presque Isle, Houlton, Machias, and the team in Skowhegan. The Somerset County EMA Director shall contact Waterville Fire (Operations) of Team 5 and Skowhegan Fire – Team 9 for support. To request outside strike support MEMA to request the activation and support of these other teams, the Somerset County EMA Director will contact MEMA.

Regional Hazardous Material Response Teams – There are six municipal fire departments, two papermills, and one Federal HazMat Response Team. These teams are located at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, MEAD Paper in Rumford, Domtar Corp in Baileyville, Windham-Westbrook-Gorham, Portland, Brunswick, Waterville, Orono, and Madawaska. These HazMat Teams have the capability to perform all HazMat Technician Level activities. The Somerset County EMA Director shall contact MEMA to request the activation and support of these other teams.

Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Emergency and Spill Response Teams – The Maine DEP maintains Chemical Spill Response Teams in Augusta, Bangor, Presque Isle, and Portland. These teams are fully equipped and trained to respond at the HazMat Technician level and perform all duties at this level. The Somerset County EMA Director shall contact the MeDEP to request the activation and support of these other teams.