



SITUATION REPORT # 2
NEW JERSEY STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
December 4, 2012, 1000 Hours

A. CURRENT SYNOPSIS:

The NJ ROIC and NJOEM are currently monitoring the Train Derailment in Paulsboro Borough, Gloucester County, New Jersey. NJ ROIC operational level is currently at a Level 2 (NJ ROIC Enhanced Operations) as of 0800 hours December 3, 2012, and NJOEM personnel are staffing the SEOC. NJOEM will provide situational awareness reports to the State, County, Local and allied agencies throughout this event. Updates will follow as needed.

B. INCIDENT:

Approximately 0715 hours, November 30, 2012, a Conrail freight train was derailed when a railroad bridge, spanning the Mantua Creek collapsed. Six (6) railcars were derailed and four (4) were partially submerged in the Mantua Creek. One (1) railcar, which contained vinyl chloride, was breached causing an air and water release of vinyl chloride. Paulsboro Borough declared a State of Emergency for the municipality and established a curfew as of 1900 hours. Initially, residents within one half mile were advised to shelter in place. At 1600 hours, an evacuation order was issued for residents in the area of Commerce Street, Railroad Avenue and Broad Street effecting approximately 45 residents. At 1700 hours, elevated levels of a volatile substance was detected and a water curtain was established to hold down vapors. Due to the elevated readings, the emergency declaration was amended to extend evacuations to span to a one half mile radius affecting approximately 500 residents.

C. RESOURCES DEPLOYED/REQUESTED:

No additional resources are requested at this time.

D. ACTIVITIES:

A smaller crane is currently conducting debris clean up at the scene and will remove the dolphin and fender material to allow the barge mounted larger crane access to the site. A barge mounted larger crane is currently moored on the Delaware River and will be utilized for rail car removal.

As of 2100 hours last night, CSX developed a preliminary Ops plan that would introduce Acetone to the 600-800 gallons of vinyl chloride. This less-reactive slurry by-product would then be vacuumed into awaiting tanker cars. The process would require 24 hour operations until the tanker is stabilized and removed.

Elevated readings of vinyl chloride were detected throughout the night. This was expected due to atmospheric cooling, diminished winds, and lack of solar radiation. Operations were suspended but have continued with the approval of a safety plan for the workers in the area with elevated readings. As a result, the Shelter In Place (SIP) protective action remains in effect. There were no night time operations last night. An unmanned water curtain was maintained throughout the night. Paulsboro Borough schools will remain closed throughout the duration of the recovery operation (which is now expected to continue through next week). When favorable weather /atmospheric conditions return (presumably after sunrise today) and air monitoring results drop below thresholds, the SIP PAR may be lifted by Paulsboro Borough OEM.

Today's operation will be to send divers into the water for damage assessment and to prep for the removal process of the breached rail car.

The Unified Command is working to get better messaging out to the public and media as to the complexity of the incident.

DEP Summary:

- First plan option was to use water from the creek to flood the tank car. Not a good option; may not have enough space to recover vapor generated.
- Most feasible plan is to use Acetone as a solvent to create a more liquid mix of the remaining vinyl chloride. This is necessary in order to access remaining VC in the tank.
- The Acetone/VC mix would be recovered via a hose and pump back to the same tank-truck used to haul the acetone.
- Vapors would be recovered during the process by vacuum suction to railcars.
- Chemists feel that the reaction of Acetone and VC would not be violent.

- The goal is to remove the product to the greatest extent possible and then render the tank-car safe to move (below LEL). Nitrogen will be used to flush remaining vapor from the car.
- It is expected that the insulating jacket is saturated with VC. The suggested solution is to flush the insulation with water.
- A backup method of capturing vapor is being worked out; it involves the use of carbon impregnated with potassium permanganate (only suitable material to scrub VC vapors).
- Conrail will be adding more contractor personnel to allow working two shifts to speed up the operation.
- Preparations and equipment set-up will begin tomorrow.
- Addition of acetone is expected to begin Wednesday.
- Operation to achieve endpoint of rendering the railcar safe may not be completed until Sunday.

Federal Agencies:

- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

State/Allied Agencies:

- NJSP Emergency Response Bureau-South
- NJSP Hazardous Material Response Unit
- NJSP Incident Management Unit
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- United States Coast Guard
- Atlantic Strike Team

County Agencies:

- Gloucester County Office of Emergency Management
- Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office
- Gloucester County HazMat
- Paulsboro Police Department
- Paulsboro Fire Department

Private Sector:

- Conrail
- CSX Rail

E. WEATHER FORECAST:

- Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 67. South wind 5 to 7 mph.

- Tonight: A chance of showers after 1:00 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 50. South wind 5 to 7 mph becoming west after midnight. Chance of precipitation is 30%. New precipitation amounts of less than a tenth of an inch possible.
- Wednesday: A slight chance of showers before noon. Cloudy through mid morning, then gradual clearing, with a high near 58. Northwest wind 8 to 16 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%