

## **8 SPILL / INCIDENT RESPONSE PLANNING**

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As part of a local wellhead protection program, the public water system must coordinate with local emergency responders (e.g. police, fire departments), the NNEPA, local Indian Health Service - Office of Environmental Health departments, and any local emergency planning committee. Using the results of the vulnerability assessment and the findings of the wellhead protection area inventory, local emergency responders should evaluate whether changes in spill / incident response measures are needed to better protect groundwater quality within wellhead protection areas. If a public water system's source water is determined to be vulnerable to surface activities, special procedures may need to be incorporated into local emergency response plans.

Changes in response may be as simple as ensuring that sufficient quantities of absorbents are on hand to respond to a large transportation spill, or recognition that in the event of a fire, it may be best to allow certain facilities or structures to burn rather than have contaminated runoff pollute the community water supply.

Appropriate spill / incident response measures must be determined prior to an incident occurring. Deviations from the standard operating procedures will only happen if reasons for the deviation are explained and accepted. This does not happen easily while responding to an on-going crisis.

For many systems, it will be important to work with a local wellhead protection committee if a realistic spill / incident response plan is to be developed. Coordination with the local emergency management (volunteer fire departments) is also important in completing this task.

Spill / incident response coordination should be completed by October 2003 for those systems using the CFR method of delineation. Systems using more sophisticated modeling methods have one year following the delineation of their wellhead protection areas (October 2004) in which to coordinate with local emergency responders. Spill / incident response plans should be reviewed / updated at least every two years, more often if the situation warrants.

Documentation of the coordination outreach should be provided in the wellhead protection planning document.