

WORKSHOP SESSION SUMMARY NIEHS NATIONAL TRAINERS' EXCHANGE MARCH 2007

1. Developing a Health and Safety Plan for Disaster Response A Closer Look at the Ideal vs. Reality (Session 13)

Presenters:

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2. Workshop Summary

The instructors from the Dillard University and UMDNJ's hazardous materials programs combined their efforts to present a session on disaster response and the importance of a HASP for effective response.

Dillard's program drew on their experience from the Katrina response. Key points included;

- Written action plan for employers
- Taking inventory
- Evacuation
- Stress and Nerve issues
- Potential job opportunities for skilled personnel

UMDNJ instructors reported on their experience from the 2004 Athos Oil Spill, in the Delaware Bay, to highlight a number of issues that need to be addressed in disaster response. Issues included;

- Multi-state and federal jurisdiction.
- Training for responders.
- Protecting volunteers
- Assistance for businesses that are affected.

3. Methods

Dillard initiated the session with an overview of the impact from Katrina. This included a timeline detailing the response (emergency personnel) and a list of other issues that needed to be immediately addressed. Other issues included loss of power, lack of equipment, shortage of supplies, identifying skilled workers, and the need to adjust to changes based on the work situation- *a moving target*.

UMDNJ presented an overview of the Athos Oil Spill response. Instructors then presented the empirical information:

- Spill affected five states in the east coast.
- Affected area falls within the jurisdiction of two federal regions (Region II and III).
- Need to protect multiple historical sites along the coast.
- Severe shortage of oil recovery equipment.
- Needed thousands of workers for initial response and secondary clean-up.
- Hundreds of volunteers helped with wildlife rescue. What training did they need?
- Dealing with weather conditions (working in the summer vs. winter).

4. Main Points

Group discussion is facilitated following a formal presentation. The instructors draw upon the expertise of the participants, allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge of emergency response.

- Elements of a HASP
 - Decontamination
 - Spill response
 - Air Monitoring
 - Emergency Response Issues
- Need for adequate training.
- Need to notify the proper authorities. Who are they?
 - Coast Guard, FEMA, USEPA, Local Authorities, etc...
- Clean-up
 - Issues with contractors.

- Workers vs. volunteers
- Accident Investigation and prevention of future occurrence (man-made disasters).

Responses from the participants

- Several participants expressed that more time was needed.
- General consensus was that these case studies were an effective tool for generating a discussion on the need for planning.