



DNR Staff Provide Spill Response and Support

RR-559

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Rarely does anyone ever plan a spill. Spills are typically caused by accidents of some sort, but when they do occur, the people involved with a spill must comply with state requirements. Wisconsin law mandates that spills of hazardous substances be immediately reported and cleaned up to protect Wisconsin's citizens and natural resources. When a spill occurs, the DNR has staff located in regional offices around the state to help in a variety of ways.

Responding To Spills

When calls are made to the DNR spill hotline during the day, the information comes directly to the DNR office in Madison, and is forwarded to the nearest available warden for follow-up. During the evening hours, the phone calls are directed to the Wisconsin State Patrol, who will forward the information to a DNR duty officer. That duty officer will then alert the local warden to the situation. Depending on the nature of the spill, local officials may also be alerted to assist at the scene. These officials can be fire department staff, hazardous materials (hazmat) specialists, or local police/sheriff department staff.

The DNR encourages the public to report hazardous substance spills using the 24-hour toll-free hotline:
1-800-943-0003

DNR Field Response

DNR Wardens

The first responders to a hazardous substance spill for the DNR typically are the DNR wardens. Wardens are local – each county has at least one warden working within the county. They have training in response activities and can assist local law enforcement officials, help set up protective barriers for small spills, or assist the responsible party in managing the spill. Wardens also know local responders, such as fire and police personnel, and are familiar with the natural resources impacted by a spill.

When a warden gets a call about a spill, their follow up may include additional phone calls to get more information about the nature of the spill, going to the site, and/or requesting other DNR assistance (e.g. fish managers, water resources staff and spill coordinators). Also, when an emergency situation occurs and the responsible party is not available or willing to take action, wardens will call in a DNR contractor to respond to the spill – the contractors are emergency response companies that provide statewide emergency response services in such situations.

These companies normally provide a response within two hours of notification, and specialize in emergency response, spill containment and removal. They are able to assess a situation, take actions to prevent spilled materials from harming the public or the environment, sample substances to determine how to manage them, contain the spilled materials and remove those substances from the spill site to a secure facility until analyses are completed to determine their final placement. At the conclusion of the response, the department will seek cost recovery from the responsible party.



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Regional Spill Coordinators

The DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program regional spill coordinators, located in each of the regional DNR offices, specialize in technical spill response issues and are available before, during and after spills occur. To locate the nearest regional spill coordinator, please see the listing at the end of this fact sheet.

Before Spills Occur...

The spill coordinators are part of local planning and response networks. They work with local emergency planning agencies, talk to the local fire departments about spill response issues, and work with the wardens to ensure a consistent DNR approach to spill response. In addition, the spill coordinators work with local industries who may handle hazardous substances as part of their business to provide them with technical support for spill prevention as well as spill response.

During A Spill...

When a spill occurs, the wardens are typically the first responders. However, the spill coordinators can provide assistance in a variety of ways. Spill coordinators have developed packets of information that are provided to persons who are responsible for the spill. Included in these packets is information on DNR regulations, additional DNR contacts, as well as listings of local contractors and waste management organizations who can assist the responsible party in management of the residual spilled material. The responsible party often consults with the spill coordinators on technical advice related to spill containment and cleanup.

After A Spill...

The spill coordinators are familiar with DNR regulations relating to site investigation and cleanup. Although smaller cleanups do not receive direct DNR oversight, the coordinators can answer questions and guide responsible parties through the process.

Northeast Regional Spill Coordinator

Jason Moeller (920) 662-5492 (Green Bay)

Northern Regional Spill Coordinator

John Sager (715) 365-8959 (Rhinelander)

Southeast Regional Spill Coordinator

Scott Ferguson (414) 263-8685 (Milwaukee)

South Central Regional Spill Coordinator

Mike Schmoller (608) 275-3303 (Madison)

West Central Regional Spill Coordinator

Tom Kendzierski (715) 839-1604 (Eau Claire)

State Spill Coordinator/Federal Removals Coordinator

Roxanne Chronert (920) 662-5488 (Green Bay)

State Emergency Response Coordinator

David Woodbury (608) 266-2598 (Madison)

Legal Counsel

Dan Graff (608) 264-8527 (Madison)

RR Program State Spill Response Team

The DNR manages spills through the RR Program's Spill Response Team (see box). This team is comprised of a state spill coordinator, a state emergency management coordinator, a federal removals coordinator, the five regional spill coordinators and legal counsel. These staff meet regularly to identify and resolve spill response issues and help make spill response efforts in Wisconsin as effective as possible.

For more information, please see the following web page: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/spills>.

This document contains information about certain state statutes and administrative rules but does not necessarily include all of the details found in the statutes and rules. Readers should consult the actual language of the statutes and rules to answer specific questions. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. This publication is available in alternative format upon request. Please call 608-267-3543 for more information.