

Chester County Department of Emergency Services

Pipeline Response Information Sheet

The various emergency service organizations and emergency management agencies in Chester County comprise a comprehensive, integrated system of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery should a hazardous materials incident occur in Chester County. The following information provides a high-level overview of the response to a pipeline incident by local and county public safety officials. The exact actions taken during a pipeline incident will vary greatly based on the situation at-hand.

911 Communications Center - The Chester County Department of Emergency Services operates the Chester County 911 Communications Center. In the event of an actual or suspected pipeline or other hazardous materials incident it would be reported to the 911 Communication Center by calling or texting 911.

Dispatch of Emergency Resources - A 911 call taker would ascertain the relevant information from the individual reporting the incident. Fire and Police dispatchers would then dispatch pre-determined emergency resources including, but not limited to, police, fire, emergency medical services, and the Chester County Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT). If identified as a pipeline emergency the pipeline operator responsible for that pipeline would also be notified.

Notification of Municipal Emergency Coordinator and Other Agencies - Additionally, the County's 9-1-1 center would notify the municipal emergency management coordinator, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services Emergency Management Division, PA Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA).

Emergency Operations Center - Based on the incident and situation, the municipality may open their Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to provide overall incident coordination and assist with on scene resource requests. The Chester County EOC may also be activated to support and assist the emergency responders with overall coordination, situational awareness, and managing resource requests.

Hazardous Materials Response Team - The Chester County Department of Emergency Services operates the Chester County HMRT. The team is certified every three years by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. The full-time County HazMat Coordinator handles the day to day operations. The team is comprised of 30 members who are part-time employees when they respond to an incident and during team training. Training for the HazMat team members is held twice a month to maintain the certification as HazMat Technicians. In addition to regularly scheduled training, team members participate in specialized training. More than half of the team is National Association of State Fire Marshals Pipeline Technicians, receiving specialized training in handling a pipeline emergency as a Hazardous Materials Technician.

National Incident Management System - All response personnel have received appropriate training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) consistent with the responsibilities they will have during an emergency incident. During a hazardous materials incident the Incident Command System will be implemented and an incident commander will be designated. In the event additional resources and agencies are involved a unified command may be established.

Incident Commander Support and Assistance - The Chester County HMRT will support and assist the on scene incident commander of a hazardous materials incident. Responder safety and overall life safety are top priority for any hazardous materials incident. Upon arriving on scene the team would approach

the incident from an upwind or uphill direction utilizing air monitoring equipment to detect and identify the presence of hazardous materials.

Protection Actions: Evacuation or Shelter-In-Place - If a hazardous material is identified the team will determine protective actions needed such as a plan to evacuate or shelter-in-place and work with incident command to deny entry to the area. The identification of the product will determine the specific protective actions to be taken.

- If a shelter in place or evacuation order is given, the Incident Commander will work with Chester County Department of Emergency Services to issue public warnings to those affected via ReadyChesCo (www.readychesco.org).
- If a shelter-in-place order is issued, emergency responders may conduct wellness checks throughout the incident.
- If an evacuation is issued the affected population would be directed upwind from the incident to await further instructions from emergency responders. During a prolonged incident a safe area would be established where the affected population would be directed. If necessary, transportation would be arranged.
- Those individuals who may need assistance to evacuate are encouraged to pre-register at www.smart911.com and create a safety profile. This will allow the County and local emergency responders to understand individual needs and ensure the necessary equipment and accommodations are available.
- Once the hazardous materials release or leak is resolved the affected population would be allowed to return to the area.

Should you have further questions or concerns regarding the material you have read, please contact the Chester County Emergency Management Division at chestercountyec@chesco.org or 610-344-4335.