



## MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

# 2013 Annual Report to the Legislature: The readiness of state government to respond to discharges of oil or hazardous substances

*In compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 115E.08, subdivision 4*

*COMPILED BY:*



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

*IN COOPERATION WITH:*



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
BUREAU OF CRIMINAL APPREHENSION



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
MINNESOTA STATE PATROL



MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF FREIGHT AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLE OPERATIONS

## **Background**

Minnesota Statutes, chapter 115E, establishes requirements responsible parties to prevent and, with state agencies, respond to discharges of oil and hazardous materials. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) commissioner coordinates state agency preparedness through the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEM). Section 115E.08, subdivision 4 requires the commissioner to annually report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature on state government's readiness to respond appropriately to such incidents.

The following agencies have primary responsibility to carry out the specified duties and authorities of chapter 115E:

- Department of Agriculture, agricultural chemicals;
- Department of Natural Resources, assessment and rehabilitation of water resources;
- Department of Public Safety, public safety and protection of property;
- Department of Transportation, transportation regulations; and
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, all other matters relating to chapter 115E.

## **National Incident Management System**

All state agencies and local jurisdictions use the federally mandated National Incident Management System (NIMS) when responding to a variety of incidents. NIMS includes the incident command system used to coordinate response. The incident command system promotes teamwork and allows various levels of government to work together without disrupting the local response structure. *Governor's Executive Order 05-02* required state agencies to adopt NIMS, all city and county governments in the state adopted it as well.

The requests for HSEM-sponsored NIMS courses remain high. In a time of elevated terror alerts and budget cuts, state agencies and local jurisdictions recognize the need to share resources and standardize training. Partnerships with the Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers and others continue to improve service delivery to meet this demand.

## **Minnesota Department of Public Safety Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division**

HSEM's mission is to help Minnesota prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and human-caused disaster. HSEM ensures state and local governments have the capability to protect the public in the event of an incident involving hazardous materials (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive devices) by providing information, guidance and training to responders.

## **Minnesota Duty Officer**

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, a division of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, maintains the Minnesota Duty Officer program. The MDO has proven to be a critical statewide link in notifying state agencies of hazardous materials spills and releases.

Incoming assistance requests cover a broad range of topics, including environmental concerns, natural disasters, and threats or suspected acts of terrorism. The MDO operates 24 hours a day,

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seven days a week, coordinating assistance to local and tribal governments, and professional response agencies.

In 2013, the MDO handled 806 calls related to discharges of oil or hazardous substances, about 10 percent of the total calls (see Figures 1 and 2). Because HSEM took responsibility for some notifications, the MDO’s resulting calls in these categories decreased more than 12 percent over the previous year.

Initiating call category	Initiating calls to MDO*	Resulting notifications/calls
Air Quality	383	1,686
Bomb Squad**	135	623
CAT/ERT Request**	20	307
Fire Marshal Investigator	497	1,113
Informational Call	2,814	3,535
Methamphetamine Lab	8	52
Mutual Aid	2	18
National Guard/CAP/Aircraft	10	35
Nuclear Plant	98	282
Pipeline Break/Leak**	191	719
SARA Title III Release**	49	228
Search and Rescue	1	6
Spills	2,816	13,482
Supplemental	797	6,459
Tank Pulls (Contaminated Soil)**	410	1,008
Waste Water Bypass	260	1,001
Weather Incident	23	40
WMD Threat**	1	7
Totals	8,515	30,601

Figure 1

\*Initiating calls appear under all appropriate categories. For example, a spill call requiring a CAT/ERT response is listed under both “Spills” and “CAT/ERT Request.” These numbers reflect only calls resulting in an MDO report.

\*\*Related to discharges of oil or hazardous substances.

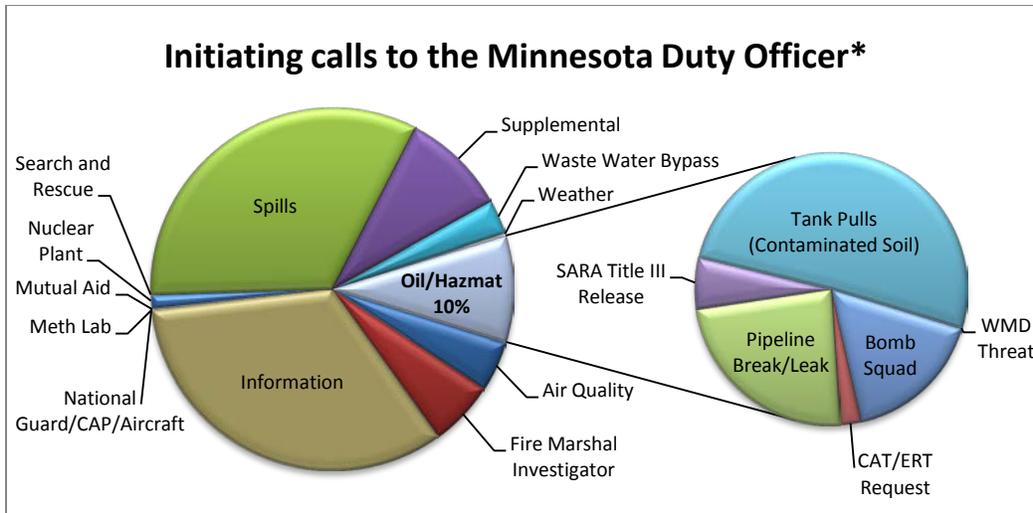


Figure 2

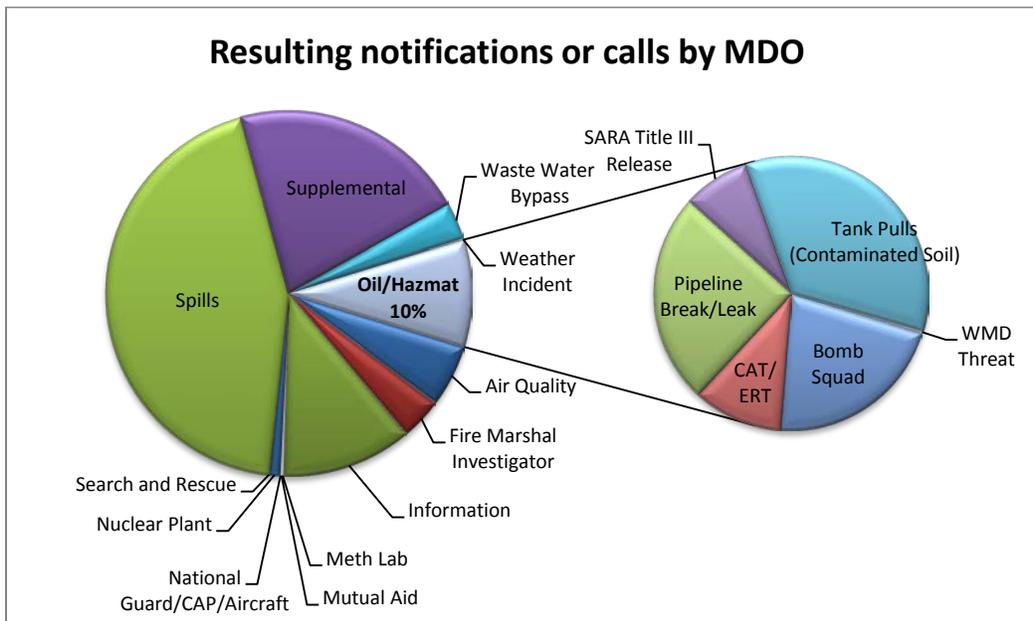


Figure 3

## Minnesota State Patrol

The Minnesota State Patrol is routinely one of the first agencies to respond to an incident involving the loss of a hazardous material. This may occur on or in association with a highway where the protection of the motoring public is critical. Within the Commercial Vehicle Section of the State Patrol are commercial vehicle inspectors and state troopers who inspect commercial vehicles involved in crashes, many transporting hazardous materials. The inspections help determine regulation violations and contributing factors to the crash. The inspectors receive training in proper hazardous materials packaging and cargo tanker operations. The information found during an inspection may be handled criminally or passed on to other state or federal agencies for further investigation.

Two inspectors are trained to conduct CVSA Level VI Radioactive inspections on vehicles transporting special high level radioactive shipments. These loads must be inspected when originating in Minnesota or entering Minnesota from Canada. The Commercial Vehicle Section also has an ATF-certified canine member, Sunny, who is able to detect more than five families of explosives. Available to assist 24 hours a day, seven days a week, she indicates on anything from fireworks to firearms, including organics and commercial-grade or military-grade explosives.

The State Patrol acquired a hazardous materials decontamination push pack from HSEM. The push pack can be deployed anywhere in the state.

### **HSEM State Emergency Response Teams Coordinator**

HSEM coordinates all state contract emergency response teams, response asset programs, and statutory requirements and policies. The coordinator ensures the state of Minnesota and local governments have the capability to respond and protect the public in the event of an incident — accidental or intentional — that may involve hazardous materials, explosive devices or structural collapse. The coordinator is a subject matter expert with both a deep technical knowledge of hazardous substances and explosives, and the broad administrative knowledge necessary to manage these specialized programs.

Specifically, the coordinator manages the operations of the statewide system of regional response teams: hazardous material teams, chemical assessment teams (as defined by the Minnesota Hazardous Materials Incident Response Act), bomb disposal squads and structural collapse teams. This includes providing information and guidance to local and state responders so they can plan, train and prepare for all hazards, including terrorist threats.

### **Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team**

HSEM maintains the Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team program, assisting local authorities by providing technical guidance to incident commanders and recommending mitigation measures necessary to protect life, property and the environment. In addition to the Emergency Response Team and Chemical Assessment Teams outlined below, two HSEM on-call staff members are trained to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Standards 29 CFR 1910.120(q)(6) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 472, chapter 7. Both the teams and the on-call staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Local authorities request assistance via the Minnesota Duty Officer. HSEM also contracts with four local law enforcement agencies to provide statewide response for explosive devices. The Hazardous Materials Response Team program continues to be an effective and efficient way to supplement local response capabilities.

### **Chemical Assessment Teams**

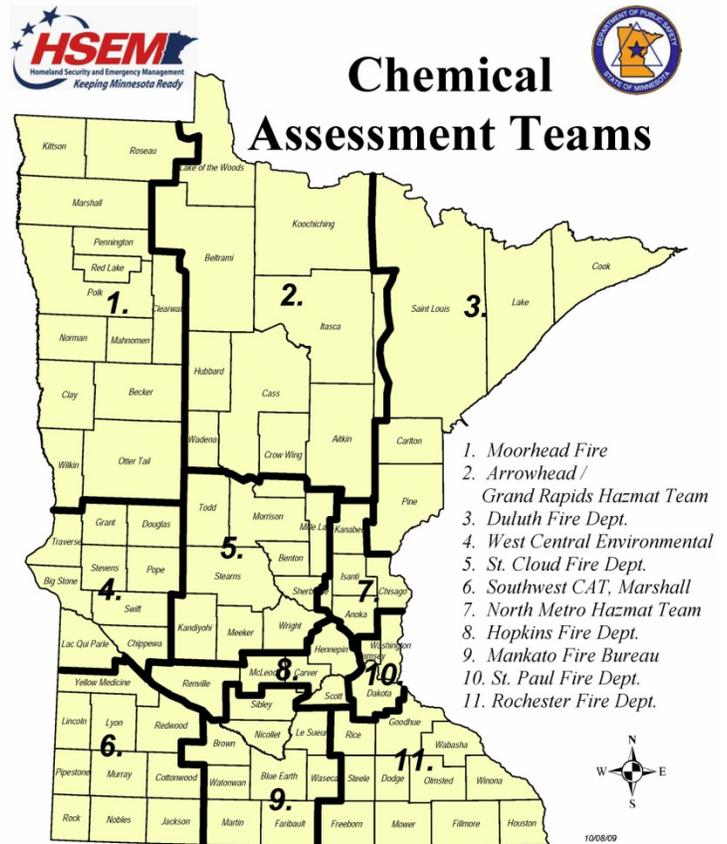
Minnesota has 11 Chemical Assessment Teams (CATs), with a minimum of nine trained personnel per team. One hazardous materials specialist and two technicians must be available to respond at all times. Demand for CAT services continues to increase. While requests for assistance within their own jurisdictions decreased from 14 last year to eight this year, CATs responded to 31 incidents that occurred outside of their respective jurisdictions during this

reporting period compared to 19 in 2012. On-call staff provided phone consultation in an additional 60 incidents, 25 percent higher than the number handled in 2012.

CATs provide local incident commanders with technical support and monitoring; professional responders trained to exceed OSHA and NFPA competencies; specialized equipment and reference materials; and additional support and follow-up by other state agencies as needed. The primary responsibilities of a CAT at an incident scene are hazard assessment, technical assistance, simple mitigation and basic decontamination.

CATs are capable of sampling for identification of unknown substances, air monitoring, plume projection, evacuation/sheltering recommendations, over pack/containment of a container and sample collection (not evidence). CATs cannot assume overall command of a local incident; they do not clean up or transport hazardous materials, mitigate explosive devices or clandestine drug labs, or respond to waste abandonment or abandoned barrel calls.

Feedback from local jurisdictions concerning the Chemical Assessment Teams continues to be positive; especially as local fire department budgets continue to shrink. Because many municipal fire departments no longer maintain local hazardous materials teams, they depend on the CATs to provide both technical information and simple mitigation guidance when they respond to hazardous materials incidents. The responsible party pays most CAT response costs.



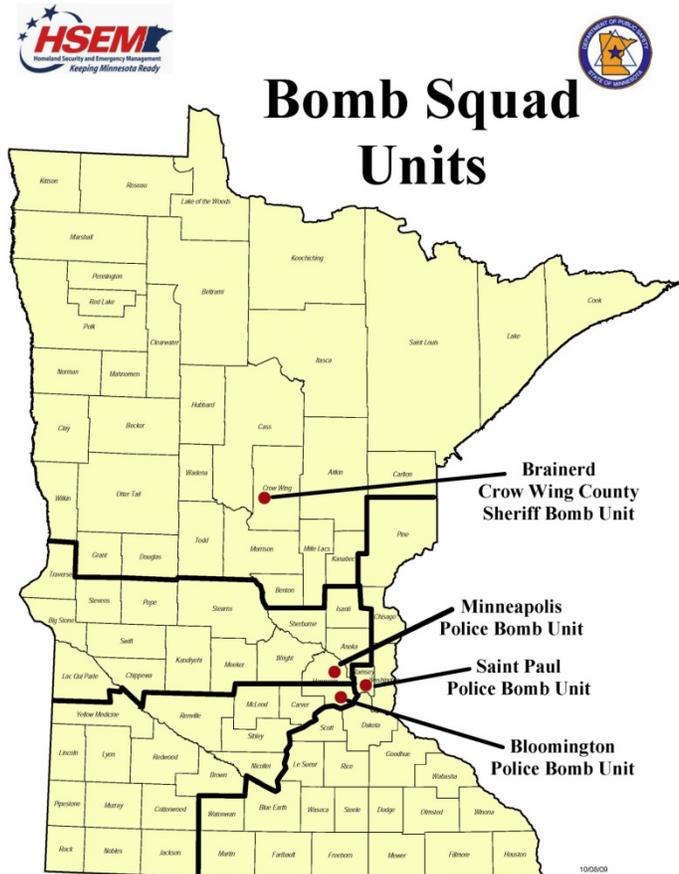
### Emergency Response Team (ERT)

The ERT is located within the city of Saint Paul and serves as a Chemical Assessment Team when needed. The ERT has at least 30 trained personnel, with four specialists, four technicians and one medical support officer on duty at all times. When operating as a CAT, the ERT responds with up to four team members and adheres to CAT response protocols.

The ERT may take action necessary to protect life, property and the environment from the effects of a hazardous material release. Their actions include preventing a hazardous release, mitigating the effects of the release and stabilizing the situation. The ERT was called upon once to respond outside of St. Paul in 2013.

## Bomb Disposal Units

There are four contracted bomb disposal units in the state teams program. These squads comprise universally trained and equipped licensed Minnesota peace officers certified as hazardous devices technicians and hazardous materials technicians or specialists. The squads perform post blast investigations, evidence handling and packaging, reconstruction of detonated devices, clandestine lab operations and site safety. Each team is equipped with hazardous device disposal robots, portable digital X-ray machines, single vent (open) trailers and total containment vessels for chemical/biological devices. Bomb squads do not respond to reports of abandoned barrels. These teams responded to 277 incidents throughout the state; the Minnesota Duty Officer received and dispatched 135 of those calls.



## Preparedness and Response Committees

### Minnesota Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee

HSEM chairs the Minnesota Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee. The committee meets quarterly or as needed to share information and discuss topics of common interest. The EPRC consists of one member from each state agency identified in *Governor's Executive Order 13-13: Assigning Emergency Responsibilities to State Agencies*. The EPRC guides state agencies as they provide support and resources to local jurisdictions during emergencies. The EPRC also facilitates updates to the *Minnesota Emergency Operations Plan*.

### State Agency Responders Committee

HSEM coordinates the State Agency Responders Committee, composed of the initial on-call field responders from all state agencies that have responsibilities in hazardous materials incident management. This group meets quarterly and reviews previous responses for opportunities to improve the state's effectiveness. The committee also actively seeks input from local jurisdictions on how the state can assist their response to hazardous materials events. This committee brings a wide variety of expertise to the table with contributions from OSHA, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the National Guard 55<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team and the departments of Health, Natural Resources, Public Safety and Transportation.

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## **Minnesota Department of Agriculture**

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is the state agency accountable for responding to agricultural chemical incidents. MDA's agricultural chemical emergency response program consists of a St. Paul based four-person team. This team rotates on-call and is on hand to respond immediately to agricultural chemical incidents any time of the day or night. Of these four MDA employees, only one is dedicated to work fulltime on agricultural chemical emergency response. The other three are lead workers in other MDA programs.

The MDA on-call staff debriefs all major agricultural chemical spills that occur. Debriefing ensures response improves, thus providing high quality service to the people of Minnesota. MDA on-call staff also has the authority to access emergency funds from the state "Superfund" when the responsible party is unknown or refuses to clean up the release. The MDA can dispatch an emergency response contractor to respond to the incident.

Fifteen regional MDA Agricultural Chemical Investigation and Anhydrous Ammonia Inspection staff in outstate Minnesota provide additional emergency response support. They may be dispatched by the on-call team to provide resources, expertise or other support to the local incident commanders, and oversight for environmental response.

The MDA continues to coordinate emergency preparedness and response readiness across all divisions. The MDA is training staff in advanced Incident Command System to better coordinate all MDA responses. In partnership with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health and United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, Veterinary Services, the MDA continues to build the Minnesota Agriculture All-Hazards Incident Management Team (IMT). Comprising the eight command and general staff positions of ICS, the Minnesota Agriculture IMT is a resource available to assist state, county and local units of government in agricultural emergencies.

## **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Emergency Response Team (MPCA ERT) consists of 11 full-time equivalent positions filled by highly trained and experienced staff. They are stationed in St. Paul and in five regional offices around the state. One emergency responder is on-call during all evening and weekend hours.

Minnesota Statutes, section 115.061, requires spills be reported to MPCA. Notification takes place via the Minnesota Duty Officer. Most MPCA permits also require notification of any petroleum tank leaks, or breakdowns or bypasses of pollution control equipment.

MPCA ERT works collectively and cooperatively with other emergency responders from federal, state, county and local units of government. MPCA's usual role is overseeing and directing cleanups done by the companies responsible for the spills and other emergencies. This may be as simple as a telephone call confirming an adequate cleanup is underway. MPCA oversight for a major spill, such as a train wreck or a petroleum pipeline break, may include MPCA staff being onsite for extended periods, coordinating response and cleanup work of the company and local public safety responders. In cases where the responsible party is unknown, unable or unwilling to conduct cleanup, MPCA dispatches state contractors under Minn. Stat., chapter 115B or 115C authorities, and usually conducts cost recovery and enforcement actions against the spiller.

During floods and storms, MPCA deploys staff to the area to assist and support the cities, counties, companies and residents. Assistance may include help with organizing, sorting, collecting, and disposing of or recycling debris; stabilizing and restarting wastewater treatment plants; cleaning up spilled oil; and recovering scattered or floating tanks. MPCA can assist and advise local public safety officials on cleanup and recovery concerns during the public safety phase of incidents involving oil and hazardous materials; however, MPCA does not take over command of such an incident from the local officials.

Spill prevention and spill response preparedness is part of the MPCA ERT's mission. Minn. Stat., chapter 115E requires companies that operate storage tanks, pipelines, railroads or cargo trailers, or otherwise handle oil or hazardous substances, to have response plans and to prevent and prepare for spills and other releases. MPCA is the lead agency for many, but not all, of the provisions of chapter 115E.

MPCA's authorities and responsibilities under chapter 115E are for pollution and environmental protection from releases of oil or chemicals. For example, MPCA reviews and regulates facilities' preparedness to contain and recover oil spills, to protect water resources from pollution and to recover spills from land to protect groundwater. However, MPCA does not review or regulate prevention or preparedness for fires, explosions or releases of acutely toxic gases that threaten the public's safety. Those threats are the responsibility of public safety officials. Chapter 115E assigns the Department of Agriculture the responsibility of working with facilities on preparedness for releases of agricultural chemicals, including pesticides, anhydrous ammonia and chlorine. MPCA reviews and enforces petroleum pipeline company preparedness for spills from pipelines, but the Department of Public Safety Office of Pipeline Safety enforces the pipeline spill and leak prevention and operation requirements.

MPCA provides oil spill response training to fire departments throughout the state. The MPCA ERT offers classroom instruction, hands-on practice deploying equipment, exercises or special requests. MPCA provides response equipment to ensure preparedness and benefit the environment. Fire departments contain businesses' spills and minimize environmental damage and cleanup costs. In calendar year 2013, the MPCA provided training to three fire departments, the Carver County Special Operations Team and the North Metro Chemical Assessment Team.

MPCA's responders have been strong players in several of the public/private sector groups formed across Minnesota to facilitate partnership between facilities and all levels of government. MPCA is an active participant in the MnWARN organization, which coordinates mutual aid in time of system breakdown or disaster of local water and wastewater operations. In the past year, communities requested MnWARN 11 times. In addition, the organization participated in a major exercise and several outreach events. The Wakota Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) group in Washington and Dakota counties and the Western Lake Superior Port Area Committee have been particularly effective and active. Caches of shared oil spill response equipment have been placed along the Mississippi, St. Croix and Minnesota Rivers by Wakota CAER. Fewer spills and better response preparedness result from CAER group activities.

August 7 and 8, MPCA participated in a Minnesota National Guard functional exercise related to a train derailment chemical release. August 28 and 29, MPCA participated in a U.S. Coast Guard

Western Lake Superior Area Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) and Maritime Security Exercise Training Program (AMSTEP) full scale exercise involving more than 300 participants from all levels of government and industry. This combined exercise was conducted to evaluate and improve upon the effectiveness of the Western Lake Superior Area Contingency Plan (AC) and Area Maritime Security Plan (AMSP) while serving as opportunity to build and strength partnerships.

## **Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations (OFCVO) is responsible for responding to transportation-related hazardous material incidents (by all modes), hazardous material commercial motor vehicle crashes, homeland security-related incidents, and spills and abandonments of hazardous material on MnDOT rights of way. OFCVO has four hazardous materials specialists who rotate on-call to respond immediately to these incidents around the clock, every day of the year. OFCVO hazardous material specialists have in-depth knowledge of hazardous materials transportation regulations. They also have extensive training and experience in the Incident Command System, emergency response techniques and management, the design and construction of hazardous material cargo tanks and other hazardous material packages, product transfer, heavy-duty vehicle recovery and towing, chemical and radiological hazards, and abandonments and illegal dumping of hazardous materials.

MnDOT hazardous materials specialists investigate causes of transportation-related incidents and refer responsible parties for regulatory review when merited. Transportation-related incidents are tracked internally; OFCVO staff also use the USDOT incident reporting system to help identify hazardous materials shippers and carriers involved in multiple incidents. Post incident follow-up investigations include an examination of shipper and carrier procedures and records to determine if hazardous materials tankers and other equipment were properly inspected and maintained and if all hazardous materials employees, including truck drivers, were properly trained, tested and certified.

All of MnDOT's hazardous materials specialists are Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance certified to conduct Level VI inspections. These inspections ensure that packaging and vehicle transports of transuranic wastes or High Route Controlled Quantities of radioactive materials are "defect free" and safe to enter Minnesota.

OFCVO hazardous materials specialists continue to offer incident response first responder training to police, fire departments and state and local highway maintenance workers. These classes are designed to assist local and state agency personnel identify the hazards that may be present at a transportation-related hazardous materials incident. OFCVO staff provides hazardous materials training to the private sector, with the goal of reducing highway crashes and hazardous materials incidents.

## **Conclusion**

Minnesota has an effective response system in place with a centralized notification point — the Minnesota Duty Officer — and an ongoing coordination and communication system between the

agencies primarily responsible for oil or hazardous substance discharge incidents. The state emergency response teams and agencies meet regularly to maintain interagency cooperation, share training, and maintain and improve response levels in order to provide the best services possible within the state. Minnesotans can be assured highly trained specialists are on hand whenever an incident involving oil or hazardous substances occurs.