Health Canada Santé Canada

FEDERAL NUCLEAR EMERGENCY PLAN

LIAISON Newsletter

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In This Issue . . .

INEX-3 Exercise Tests Consequence Management

The ability of governments to manage the consequences of a radiological nuclear (RN) emergency was put to the test during INEX-3, a tabletop exercise held in Ottawa, October 18–19, 2005.

INEX-3 is the third generation of international nuclear exercises organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development–Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA). The goal was to compare the state of readiness and decision-making process within the international community for late phase emergency and recovery operations in case of a national-level RN incident. The objective of the exercise was to test how governments managed consequences arising from:

- agricultural countermeasures and food restrictions,
- countermeasures that may affect travel, trade and tourism,
- recovery management issues, and
- public information.

As the lead department responsible for RN emergency preparedness and for exercising the Federal Nuclear Emergency Plan (FNEP), Health Canada planned the Canadian INEX-3 exercise with various federal government departments and agencies. Exercise Director was Health Canada's Helen Griffiths, Head of the Coordination and Operations Preparedness Section (COPS), Nuclear Emergency Preparedness and Response Division (NEPRD).

Along with federal government representatives, delegates from provincial agencies and ministries from Ontario, New Brunswick and British Columbia and from the US Federal Radiological Monitoring Assessment Center participated in INEX-3.

The exercise had three distinct phases—urgent, intermediate and long-term, and was "time compressed" so that it could span several weeks.

Canada

INEX-3 participants are briefed in Social Development Canada's Emergency Operation Centre.

Its scenario involved the sabotage of a fictitious vineyard and fruit orchard in south-eastern Ontario. The scenario postulated the spread of radioactive material over the vineyard and surrounding land in early September but officials did not learn of it until six weeks later –October 17.

Investigations revealed that there was a high probability various food groups could have been significantly contaminated. The contamination was most likely present in the neighbouring farms and vineyards, and some of it could have spread to a nearby village.

For the second day, the scenario had moved forward by 21 days and was focussed on managing recovery operations for the contaminated lands and food stuffs.

"The exercise was timely, with respect to Canada's needs for effective radiological emergency management, said Brian Phillips, Director, Radiation Protection Services (RPS), BC Centre for Disease Control. "It provided a realistic scenario that engaged all levels of government, locally and some remotely."

The benefit of the exercise, according to Phillips, was the opportunities and challenges it presented to the RPS, as it had to respond to a major incident from a distance. British Columbia had been identified in the scenario as a province affected by the sabotage, when contaminated food items were discovered to have been exported from Ontario to BC for sale.

"The last time [RPS] was involved in a situation of this scope was when it was dealing with the consequences from the Chernobyl accident, where radioactive fallout was affecting Canada directly and indirectly."

"The exercise was extremely valuable, with a very thought-provoking scenario" said Maureen Griffiths, Assistant Chief, Provincial Prevention/Mitigation and Preparedness Programs, Emergency Management Ontario, as it helped to clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify gaps. "I would like to run the same or a similar exercise next year with our provincial emergency operations centre and ministry action groups playing along with our federal partners."

A report evaluating the Canadian INEX-3 exercise will be presented to a meeting of the NEA, to be held in Paris, in March 2006.

For more information about INEX-3, please contact Helen Griffiths at helen_m_griffiths@hc-sc.gc.ca

For more information about the INEX series of exercises, please visit http://www.nea.fr/html/rp/inex/

Susan Fletcher, Assistant Deputy Minister, Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, Health Canada, participated in a simulated media briefing, which wrapped up INEX-3.

Health Canada to Purchase Two Satellite Data Communication Systems

Health Canada's Radiation Protection Bureau (RPB) is purchasing two portable satellite communication ground stations to support NEPRD's emergency IT infrastructure.

The high-speed satellite data communication systems, approved as a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Research and Technology Initiative (CRTI) technology acquisition project, are meant to fill data communication gaps that were identified during the operational use of the division's ARGOS/EMAP systems.

The ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs du Québec utilizes portable satellite technology, in its mobile command post.

ARGOS—the Accident Reporting and Guidance Operational System—is an application that integrates all relevant available data sets for nuclear emergency response on a common platform, so that an assessment of the environmental and health impact of a nuclear release can be performed rapidly. Some of the data sets are generated by field teams during the response phase and must be promptly and reliably communicated back to the ARGOS and EMAP systems for assessment and decision-making.

ARGOS became operational in March 2005, and it was implemented by Health Canada with the collaboration of Environment Canada's Canadian Meteorological Centre and other federal partners.

Its companion system, EMAP, is a Web-based geographic information system (GIS) used under the FNEP to distribute ARGOS outputs and integrate GIS functions into FNEP operations.

By using satellite communication stations during an exercise or a real event, the FNEP Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will not have to rely solely on regular telecommunication links to send data from the field operations to the TAG's assessment/response tools.

Regular telecommunications links may be overloaded during an emergency, affected by severe weather, such as ice storms, or simply not be available in remote areas.

The satellite communication stations will also provide RPB with a back-up communication system between partners in the field and the TAG, when normal communication links are disrupted.

For more information, please contact Eric Pellerin, Acting Head of the Technical Assessment and Coordination Section, NEPRD, at eric_r_pellerin@hc-sc.gc.ca

LIAISON's on the Web!

We've posted LIAISON on Health Canada's new Web site http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index_e.html

To find it, just click "Emergencies & Disasters" on the side navigation bar, and then select "Publications & Reports".

CRMN Participating in Canada-United States Environmental Monitoring Project

Health Canada's Canadian Radiological Monitoring Network (CRMN) is participating in an inter-operability study with the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) National Air and Radiation Environmental Laboratory (NAREL).

The CRMN national laboratory located in Ottawa, Ontario, monitors environmental releases of radioactivity from atmospheric nuclear weapons testing and accidental releases from nuclear facilities. It collects air, precipitation, drinking water, atmospheric water vapour and milk for analysis.

The network currently includes 26 environmental monitoring stations, and additional sites located near nuclear reactors.

NAREL, located in Montgomery, Alabama, operates a similar national network of 59 monitoring stations.

The study was launched as a step towards understanding the potential for inter-operability between the two laboratories of the network. The intent of the study was to compare the data obtained by the two laboratories to see if there are differences in the results and, if so, why.

The first experiments were conducted in 2005 and they were designed to compare legacy data, as the US EPA will soon be adopting a new high-volume air sampling system that has real-time gamma spectroscopy capability and data telemetry on board.

In March 2005, existing air sampling equipment was exchanged and, in May 2005, the equipment began operating side-by-side, at the national laboratories in Ottawa and in Montgomery. The air filters were then returned to their home laboratories—those from NAREL's systems that were operated in Ottawa, were returned to Montgomery, and vice versa—for data comparison and analysis.

To date, the results of gross beta and gamma analyses from the two systems and between the two laboratories have been in very good agreement.

The two groups plan to meet in the Fall 2005 to discuss furthering their collaboration.

For more information about the project, please contact Jeff Whyte at jeff_whyte@hc-sc.gc.ca

Community Resiliency –Theme of Conference

Community resiliency in the face of disaster was the theme of the 18th emergency preparedness conference organized by the Pacific Northwest Preparedness Society (PNPS) and held in Vancouver, October 4–6, 2005.

The conference attracted delegates from across the province and was based on the action plan that delegates had developed the year before.

Workshops included:

- public awareness and education,
- psycho-social impact on responders,
- volunteer management,
- community health care resources,
- critical infrastructure, and
- community emergency programs.

For more information about the conference and the PNPS, please go to http://www.epconference.ca/

PSEPC Sponsors Master Exercise Practitioner Program

The Government of Canada is offering emergency exercise managers, planners and designers the opportunity to earn a Master Exercise Practitioner (MEP) certificate.

The MEP program is conducted by the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), on behalf of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC). It was first offered in Canada in 2005, in the Spring and the Fall. After the Spring session, the course was modified to better reflect the Canadian environment.

The program is held over a two-week period, and it is designed for individuals who are responsible for emergency management within their organization, who write emergency plans or who develop exercises regularly.

Students are trained on all aspects of exercise design, conduct (simulation and control) and evaluation. They follow the same approach and use the same methodologies and documentation as do their FEMA counterparts.

The course tuition fee is sponsored by PSEPC's National Exercises Division (NED).

"Having MEP-trained personnel benefits all federal government departments and agencies," said Jennifer Franssen, a NED manager.

"The result is a common understanding of the exercise process within the Government of Canada, support for the National Security Policy, a sharing of expertise and access to subject matter experts from exercise/emergency planning divisions within other government departments."

To date, 77 Canadians have taken the MEP program, including four NEPRD staff members.

The next course is scheduled for the Spring, 2006.

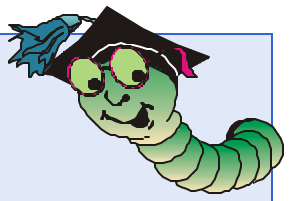
For more information, please contact Jennifer Franssen, at jennifer.franssen@psepc-sppcc.gc.ca

CRTI RN Cluster Field Team Exercise

A large scale field team exercise, employing federal and provincial responders, will be held in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, March 28 – 30, 2006.

Participating in this exercise will be the CBRN Research and Technology Initiative (CRTI) radiological nuclear cluster, the CRTI forensic cluster, as well as New Brunswick's Emergency Measures Organization.

For more information, please contact Helen M. Griffiths, Head, Coordination and Operations Preparedness Section, Nuclear Emergency Preparedness and Response Division (NERPD). Helen can be reached at helen_m_griffiths@hc-sc.gc.ca



Fun with Jumbles

1. eiaatmsinurl ecodx (2 words)

_____

2. taacimnoinnot

_____

3. arornaidilt

_____

4. iocniatifnto

_____

All terms can be found in our glossary:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ed-ud/event-incident/radiolog/info/glossary-glossaire_e.html

Profile:

Federal, Provincial/Territorial Radiation Protection Committee

The Federal, Provincial/Territorial Radiation Protection Committee (FPTRPC) serves as the primary governmental forum to develop, promote, coordinate and harmonize the standards and practices for radiation protection within federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Its work covers a broad range of radiation protection matters—environmental, occupational and public health and safety issues, emergency preparedness, etc.

Formed in 1993, the FPTRPC succeeded the Federal Provincial Sub-Committee on Radiation Surveillance.

Mission

The mission of the FPTRPC is to advance the development and harmonization of practices and standards for radiation protection within federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Mandate

Its mandate is to support federal, provincial and territorial radiation protection agencies in their respective mandates by:

- providing a national focus for government radiation protection agencies;
- promoting the harmonization of radiation health and safety programs;
- identifying emerging issues in radiation protection and recommending actions to the appropriate jurisdictions;
- developing and harmonizing national protection standards, guidelines and input for legislation;
- providing a forum for representatives of the provinces and territories, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), the Department of National Defence (DND), Health Canada and other federal departments and/or agencies; and
- considering requests from other governmental committees and agencies concerned with health, safety and environmental issues and liaising regularly with such committees and agencies.

Membership

Federal representatives to the FPTRPC include a delegate each from the CNSC, DND and Health Canada. Each province and territory is represented by a delegate (except for Ontario as it may have two delegates—one representing the Ministry of Labour and the other, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care).

Meetings

The committee meets annually in Ottawa, in October.

For more information about the FPTRPC, please visit http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/radiation/fpt-radprotect/index_e.html

We Want to Hear From You!

Do you have news and information that you would like to share with your colleagues in the nuclear emergency preparedness and response field?

If you do, let us know!

Just send us an e-mail to liaison@hc-sc.gc.ca, with your news, as well as your comments and suggestions for future issues of LIAISON. Submission guidelines can be found on page 8 of this newsletter.

We Would Like to Introduce to You . . .

Brian Phillips and **Dale Hills** recently joined the LIAISON Editorial Advisory Committee, and **Denis Carrière** is a new NEPRD staff member.

Brian Phillips is Director, RPS, which is now at the BC Centre for Disease Control in Vancouver and was formerly with the BC Ministry of Health.

Brian has over 30 years of work experience in radiation protection and has been involved in emergency management since joining the BC Ministry of Health in 1985. He was a member of the BC and Canadian delegation to the October 2002 Top-Off 2 Cross Border Exercise and a speaker at the April 2003 Top-Off 2 Interactive Workshop. In the past two years, Brian and his staff have provided CBRN training on radiation emergency response to Vancouver Police Department members and to hazard materials team members of the Vancouver and Surrey Fire departments.

Brian is the BC representative on the Federal, Provincial/Territorial Coordinating Committee for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Management, as well as being a 20-year member of the FPTRPC.

He is a physics graduate, specializing in atomic and nuclear physics, from the University of Birmingham, in the United Kingdom, and has a Master's degree in Radiation Protection from the University of Salford in Manchester.

Dale Hills is the senior occupational hygienist for the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and he is responsible for the enforcement of health and safety regulations in the territories. Previously, Dale was an occupational industrial hygienist at Elk Falls Pulp and Paper Mill, responsible for the control of hygiene issues at the site. He was also a front-line responder with the site's emergency response team.

Dale holds a Master of Science degree in occupational and environmental hygiene from the University of British Columbia, with research conducted at the Maple Ridge Fire and Safety Training Centre. He recently received his professional certification. Dale is the Northwest Territories' representative on Health Canada's FPTRPC.

Denis Carrière has joined COPS, NEPRD, as an Emergency Preparedness Officer. His current duties include coordinating various radiological and nuclear exercises, FPT meetings and working groups on radiological and nuclear emergency management.

Previously, Denis was with CANUTEC—the Canadian Transport Emergency Centre of the Department of Transport—where he provided technical advice to emergency responders and coordinated response activities during dangerous goods emergencies. His duties also included providing advice on the safe handling and transportation of dangerous goods according to applicable acts and regulations.

Denis may be reached at (613) 948-2581 or at denis_carriere@hc-sc.gc.ca

Fun with Jumbles–Answers

1. Codex Alimentarius
2. Contamination
3. Irradiation
4. Notification

Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.

Health Canada

LIAISON Submission Guidelines

LIAISON is published three times a year by Health Canada's Nuclear Emergency Preparedness and Response Division.

LIAISON is an electronic newsletter dedicated to promoting a broad and open exchange of information relating to nuclear emergency preparedness and response in Canada, by objectively sharing news and information among stakeholders. Our vision is to foster a dedicated, visible and collaborative relationship among all stakeholders involved in radiological and nuclear emergency planning, preparedness and response for the benefit of all Canadians.

Articles submitted for publication:

- are welcome in either French or English
- should focus on issues relating to nuclear emergency preparedness and response
- should be less than 500 words (maximum) and written in layman's terms

Please save your article in text (*.txt), Word (*.doc) or WordPerfect (*.wpd) format. If you have graphics to support your text, send them along! Images should be 150–300 dpi and in JPEG (*.jpg) or bitmap (*.bmp) format.

Note that all articles will be edited for length and clarity prior to publishing. Accompanying images may or may not be used in accordance with editorial board decisions.

If you want to add your name to LIAISON's mailing list, please contact us! Just send us an e-mail, requesting that we add you to our list of readers.

Contact Us!

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