

Element 11: Emergency Preparedness and Response – Background

Revision: 06

Revision Date: 06/24/09

Approved By:

BACKGROUND

This element outlines how the Metro District maintains emergency response plans (Plans) with procedures to assure the effective response to accidents and emergency situations associated with its biosolids management activities.

The District has identified two kinds of risks associated with its biosolids management activities under abnormal and emergency situations.

1. Real Risks – those that pose a threat to safety, human health, the environment, or otherwise involve legal or regulatory violations, and
2. Perceived Risks – those that pose no significant threat to human health or the environment, but members of the public believe they do pose such threats.

The District has developed and is prepared to respond to a variety of biosolids-related, real and perceived, emergencies as documented in various Plans. These Plans protect the biosolids quality, health of employees and the public, minimize interruption of operations, meet all federal, state, and local regulations, and respond promptly and positively in the event of abnormal and emergency situations, real or perceived.

To ensure that District employees who may become involved in real or perceived biosolids-related risk situations respond appropriately, training programs have been developed and implemented which incorporate the following considerations:

- Identification of real biosolids risks
- Identification of perceived biosolids risks
- Identification of likely scenarios and situations
- Identification of appropriate response(s)
- Identification of ways to prevent incidents from occurring
- Review of actual past situations
- Assessment of past risk response performances

In addition to new employee emergency response training, District staff periodically conducts emergency response drills. From these drills, and the computer based Intranet testing, the District can determine if there are any gaps in the emergency response training. After a simulation drill or actual event, District staff responsible for the plan will evaluate the response plan and will make the appropriate adjustments to the response plan.

The District is dedicated to providing safe working conditions for its employees, vendors, and contractors and has adopted an overall safety policy, which states the District “shall continually strive to conduct its operations with the utmost regard for the prevention of accidents, both to its employees and the public. The District believes that a good place to work must be a safe place. The District recognizes that accidents can be prevented by intelligent cooperation of personnel and the understanding and constant practice of accident prevention by each employee. Accident prevention must be a part of every job. It is the duty of each employee to perform his/her work courteously, efficiently, and with the utmost regard for safety.”

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the various Plans is to protect the health of employees and the public, minimize interruption of operations, meet all federal, state, and local regulations, and respond promptly and positively in the event of abnormal and emergency situations, real or perceived.

SCOPE

The Plans cover all critical control points throughout the biosolids value chain, from planning to final disposition, with procedures for handling both real risks and perceived risks.

REFERENCES

- Critical Incident Response Plan (CIRP)
- Industrial Waste/Pretreatment Procedures for Implementing the Pretreatment/Industrial Waste Control Plan
- Biosolids Processing Protocol
- Biosolids Storage and Cleanup procedure
- Agricultural Application Site Emergency Guide
- Contractor, Vendor, and Visitor Safety Awareness for METROGRO Farm
- Contractor and Vendor Security Protection
- Contractor, Vendor, and Visitor Safety Awareness
- Interactive Intranet Training (Plant Evacuation procedure)
- Safety Awareness Program Video Library
- District Vehicle Accident Reporting procedure

DEFINITIONS

Emergency Preparedness – A structured emergency planning process to ensure plausible emergency situations affecting appropriate biosolids management have been identified, response plans and procedures developed, and trained emergency response personnel and equipment are available and in a state of readiness.

Emergency Response – specific emergency plans and activities initiated to contain emergency situation and bring it under control to minimize environmental impacts.

Environmental Impacts – any change to the environment (positive or negative) including public health, public nuisance and odor problems, that wholly or partially result directly or indirectly from the organization’s activities, products or services, including those activities associated with biosolids management, and those activities that alter (positively or negatively) the acceptable disposal/use method or create public nuisance and public health risks.

Noncompliance – a deviation from federal, state and local laws, regulations and other compliance requirements applicable to the organization’s biosolids management activities.

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RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

- Safety Officer
- Security Officer
- Critical Incident Commander
- District Manager
- EMS Coordinator
- Department Heads

RELATED TRAINING

For related training, please refer to Element #8 of this manual.

PROCEDURAL STEPS

1. All Department Heads will ensure that current copies of the procedures and plans related to their specific area are readily available in their department, as appropriate, and that employees are trained on where they are located.
2. All Department Heads will ensure employees understand the procedures and plans and that they are sufficiently trained in carrying out appropriate steps.
3. Potential contractor's bidding on projects at the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility (RWHTF) or on the METROGRO Farm are made aware of procedures and plans during the bidding process.
4. Contractor's who are awarded a contract to begin work on a project at the Central Treatment Plant or the METROGRO Farm are given copies of procedures and plans.

(Note: Contractors are limited to construction-related and maintenance facilities activities for the District's infrastructure, RWHTF and the METROGRO Farm facilities. To minimize any negative impacts to the high quality of biosolids produced by the District, the Project Impact Checklist procedure followed by project initiators and Department Project Managers includes a review and signoff by the EMS Coordinator. Engineering Project Managers will be responsible for overseeing construction activities to ensure the environmental issues are followed through).

5. All Plans will include a frequency for conducting simulation drills. Review of the Plan will also take place after a simulation drill or an actual emergency event, then revised as necessary.