

# Minnesota's Preparedness for an Oil Transportation Incident



**Mark Dunaski**  
Deputy Commissioner  
Minnesota Department of Public Safety



## Purpose of the Study

- **DPS directed to prepare a report on incident preparedness**
  - Part of comprehensive legislation on railroad and pipeline safety in 2014.
  - HSEM contracted with Management Analysis & Development
  
- **The legislation required the report to:**
  1. Summarize the preparedness and emergency response framework in the state.
  2. Provide an assessment of costs and needs for training and equipment.
  3. Develop a comprehensive public and private response capacity inventory.
  4. Provide information and analysis that forms the basis for allocation of funds.
  5. Develop benchmarks or assessment criteria.
  6. Assist in long-range oil transportation incident preparedness planning
  7. Make recommendations for any legislative changes.



## Scope of the Study

- **The study focuses on public safety preparedness and response to an oil transportation incident involving railroads or pipelines in Minnesota.**
- **The study does not provide analysis or recommendations on :**
  - Prevention activities.
  - Environmental mitigation and clean-up.
  - Infrastructure development (such as transportation or health system infrastructure).
  - Relative merits of different modes of oil transportation.



## Study Methods

- **Research from August –December 2014**
- **MAD used several data sources :**
  - ✓ Focused literature review and guidance from emergency preparedness and response experts.
  - ✓ Comprehensive interviews with subject matter experts.
  - ✓ Survey of public safety officials in jurisdictions that are potentially affected by an oil transportation incident.
  - ✓ Focused interviews with state and local elected officials in areas potentially affected by an oil transportation incident.



## Key Findings

**Oil and other hazardous materials incidents are one of many risks in Minnesota.**

- Other threats, risks, and hazards are also of serious concern to emergency management officials.



## Key Findings

**Community stakeholders have expressed their concerns about rail transportation**

- However, elected officials indicated that constituents may not view preparedness for a possible oil transportation incident as a significant issue, given other priorities in their communities.



## Key Findings

### Minnesota's Preparedness and Response Framework

- Minnesota takes an all-hazards approach to emergency preparedness.
- Minnesota has a comprehensive framework that would apply to an oil transportation incident.
- Minnesota's statutory framework places an emphasis on coordination and collaboration



## Key Findings

### Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident

- Rail and pipeline companies maintain that they are ready and able to respond, noting that they have their own firefighting and spill response resources.
- HSEM coordinates regional response teams that can provide assistance in an oil transportation emergency.
- State agencies can provide expert advice to local governments.



## Key Findings

### Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident

- The mutual aid infrastructure is well-developed.
- Most counties and cities have all-hazard emergency plans that would apply to an oil transportation incident.
- First responders are relatively unfamiliar with private sector resources and regional response team resources.



## Key Findings

### Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident

- Local governments generally do not have the equipment or personnel to respond to a significant oil transportation incident.
- Some emphasized that local governments are not the primary responsible party for an oil transportation incident—the rail or pipeline company is responsible.



## Key Findings

### Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident

#### *Perceptions and Training*

- First responders rated their area's preparedness for an oil transportation incident 2.6 on a 1 to 5 scale.
- Many indicated that additional training is essential for responder preparedness.
  - Training for all first responders (not solely firefighters) is important.



## Key Findings

### Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident

#### *Equipment*

- Most first responders said they did not know what additional equipment or resources are necessary.
- Many experts agree that the appropriate response to a significant oil fire is to let the fire burn out or down.
- Interviewees often warned against focusing on procuring equipment as a means of increasing preparedness.



## Key Findings

### **Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident**

#### ***Coordination and Collaboration***

- Need for improved connections between first responders, private companies, and state agencies.
- Adding resources without coordination would not be helpful.



## Key Findings

### **Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident**

#### ***Changes underway to enhance preparedness***

- 2014 legislation provided direction and funding to state agencies to enhance preparedness



## Key Findings

### **Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident**

#### ***Funds for enhancing preparedness***

- Most interviewees recommended increasing training as a priority for resources.
- A few interviewees recommended caution and prudence in expanding funding.
- It was not feasible to develop specific assessments of costs for training and equipment for local first responders to be prepared for an oil transportation incident.
- A regional approach to funding requests would encourage cross-jurisdiction and cross-sector collaboration.



## Key Findings

### **Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident**

#### ***Evaluating Response Preparedness***

- Difficulties associated with evaluating preparedness for an oil transportation incident or other emergency



## Key Findings

### Developing Minnesota's Capacity to Respond to an Oil Transportation Incident

#### *Other issues*

- Several concerns were identified by participants in this study that are beyond the scope of this report.
  - Improving tank cars and tracks.
  - Routing pipelines and rail routes away from population centers and environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Allowing rail companies to have their own law enforcement personnel.
  - Additional planning for incidents involving casualties.
  - Potential problems associated with the limited number of dedicated burn beds in Minnesota.



## Recommendation/Intended Actions

### 1. Increase awareness about oil transportation incidents, then develop additional capacity

- Engage in a comprehensive approach to expanding awareness about oil transportation incidents, to include:
  - ✓ Conducting the awareness-level training already underway for fire departments and other responders.
  - ✓ Developing online resources for the public and first responders.
  - ✓ Developing guidance for first responders and local governments on responding to an oil incident, including assessment and evacuation protocols.



## Recommendation/Intended Actions

### **2. Connect funding for training and equipment to regional coordination**

- Develop a process for organizations to apply for training or equipment funding available in the Railroad and Pipeline Safety Account.
- Requirements for funding should include the formation or expansion of a multi-county or regional collaborative group.
- Agencies participating in the State Agency Responders Committee should develop guidelines, model charters, and other templates
- A regional and community-based approach will allow first responders to examine the risks in their communities in light of new information.



## Recommendation/Intended Actions

### **3. Delay significant changes to the Railroad and Pipeline Safety Account and related allocations**

- Future funding determinations should ensure that preparedness efforts are sustainable.
  - For example, funding for the new emergency response team will lapse at the end of Fiscal Year 2017.



## Recommendation/Intended Actions

- 4. Develop a state-level program evaluation approach to assess hazardous materials preparedness activities**
  - Agencies participating in the State Agency Responders Committee should jointly develop a list of priority results for preparedness activities and establish timelines and measures to show progress towards these results.



## Recommendation/Intended Actions

- 5. Enhance existing databases (or develop new databases) to provide more comprehensive information about response resources across the state**
  - Databases to include additional information regarding resources from state agencies, private sector organizations, and local governments.



## Recommendation/Intended Actions

### 6. Establish Standards for Pipeline Preparedness and Response

- The new requirements for rail companies will allow the state to examine rail preparedness efforts.
- Adopt response standards, including timelines, for pipeline companies that are similar in scope and content to the response standards applicable to railroads.

## Minnesota's Preparedness for an Oil Transportation Incident



Questions?