What is the National Response Center?

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1971 (FWPCA) mandated the development of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). The NCP established the National Response Center (NRC) as the SOLE national communication center for reporting Oil, Chemical, Radiological, Biological, and Etiological discharges into the environment anywhere in the United States and its territories.

In addition to gathering and distributing oil spills, hazardous materials and chemical releases data for Federal On-Scene Coordinators (FOSC) and serving as the communication and operation center for the National Response Team (NRT), the NRC maintains agreements with a variety of Government entities to provide notifications and other services pertaining to incidents that meet the entity specific established criteria.

NRC Operations

The NRC, a separate entity within National Response System, operates 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year; this communication center is multi-agency funded and located within Coast Guard Headquarters Building in Washington, D.C. Once contacted via phone the NRC watch stander will guide the caller through a series of questions based on a standardized report form.

The information is immediately entered into the Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS—an in-house developed database program) and notifications are made to the designated FOSC, and all other interested federal, and state agencies. Notifications are based on several pre-established criteria including: material involved, incident cause, mode of transportation, location, and other data fields.

The responsible party for any oil or chemical release, that meets federal reporting requirements, must report the incident to the NRC immediately. Calling the NRC meets the initial federal reporting requirements. Additional state and local notifications may be required. The NRC does not provide emergency response. In life threatening situations ALWAYS call your local EMS or 911 first.

If you see or discover an oil spill or release of hazardous materials and are not the responsible party, you should contact the NRC with whatever information you have.

Reports may be made 24 hours a day either telephonically or through the online reporting form found at: www.nrc.uscg.mil. Please have the following information available when you contact us:

- If known, the name, address, and phone number of the responsible party
- Material name and quantity released
- Location of the incident
- Time of the incident
- The suspected cause of the incident

What if you do not have all the above listed information? Or want to stay anonymous? We still want and need your call. You may be providing the NRC with the first notification that an incident has occured or is on-going.

National Response Center
Phone: 800-424-8802
Website: www.nrc.uscg.mil

"Our Response Communications Today Helps Better The Environment Tomorrow"