

**MONMOUTH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE/UST UNITS  
2006 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Overview**

The Monmouth County Health Department's Hazardous Materials Response Unit continues to provide world class hazardous materials and environmental response services to the citizens of Monmouth County. It is the responsibility of the hazardous materials unit to develop and maintain standardized hazardous materials (Hazmat) and CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive) emergency response capability, capacity, and competence. We maintain a core of highly trained and equipped personnel that will respond to hazmat and CBRNE emergencies and conduct investigations in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), and the New Jersey State Police (NJSP) Special Operations Section. All emergency response activities are conducted in accordance with the Monmouth County Emergency Operations Plan, the DEP Technical Requirements for Site Remediation, applicable PEOSHA requirements, and the NJSP Hazmat Emergency Response Team Standards for Operations and Training.

**County Environmental Health Act (CEHA)**

Since 1985, the Monmouth County Health Department has entered into a written agreement with the DEP to provide environmental services under the CEHA program. As the certified CEHA agency for hazmat and CBRN response in Monmouth County, the hazmat unit must respond to all hazmat and CBRN emergencies referred by DEP to assess environmental health threats, make recommendations for response actions, and coordinate those response actions with local, state and federal agencies. We must also maintain specialized hazmat and CBRN field monitoring equipment that meets the minimum NJSP standards for hazardous materials response teams. Since our unit is also considered a state asset under the agreement, we can be called to respond to emergencies outside of Monmouth County at the request of the DEP and/or the NJSP Special Operations Section. In addition, we are required to submit reports to DEP documenting all incidents responded to, remedial actions taken, and any potential violations of state environmental laws. Incidents involving potential criminal violations are promptly referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

In accordance with our CEHA agreement, the hazmat unit must also coordinate with the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and local hazmat/CBRNE response units to develop and maintain an integrated emergency preparedness system throughout the county. We currently have written agreements with the following hazmat units to provide mutual aid and equipment when requested:

- Earle Naval Weapons Station Fire Dept. Hazmat Unit
- Fort Monmouth Fire Dept. Hazmat Unit
- Howell OEM Hazmat Unit
- Middletown Fire Dept. Special Services Unit
- Neptune OEM Hazmat Unit
- Southard Fire Dept. Hazmat Unit

The Health Dept. hazmat unit sponsors a regular schedule of meetings throughout the year for senior members of the hazmat teams, along with representatives from the county OEM and county Fire Marshal's office. Issues discussed include: current events, available grant funding, response and equipment standardization, reporting requirements, and joint training opportunities. These meetings have become an integral part of the planning process and will continue to be so in the years ahead.

### **Domestic Preparedness**

The hazmat unit continues to be involved in domestic preparedness planning for the county. The hazmat unit's Program Coordinator maintains a seat on the county's Grant Working Group, LEPC, and regularly participates in other planning meetings with county OEM and the county Fire Marshall. Based on these planning initiatives, we continue to revise our response protocols and improve our response capabilities. We also continue to coordinate countywide efforts to develop response guidelines to emergencies with other organizations including hospitals, postal facilities, municipal fire, police and EMS units. Coordination with the county OEM and Fire Marshall has resulted in an integrated network of primary and secondary departments for mutual aid including hazmat response and mass decontamination.

2006 Federal domestic preparedness grant funding allocations for hazmat/CBRNE initiatives were significantly reduced from previous years. Monmouth County received a total of \$327,972.00 from the New Jersey Department of Homeland Security. From this total, \$130,000.00 was reserved for salary and wages for the County's Critical Infrastructure Coordinator and Domestic Preparedness Planner. This left only 197,972.00 for all other initiatives. Approximately \$50,000.00 was appropriated for CBRN detection equipment. These funds were used to purchase two new biological threat detection instruments that can be utilized by all of the County's hazmat teams. The first instrument employs a DNA-based detection technology that can quickly determine whether a sample contains abnormally elevated levels of microbes or viruses. The second instrument employs the latest polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technology in a mobile platform that can isolate and detect specific biological pathogens in the field, including Anthrax, Brucella, E. Coli, Plague, Salmonella, Smallpox, and Tularemia. Together, the two instruments will significantly enhance the County's ability to quickly declare whether a biological threat is credible and determine what level of response is needed to mitigate any potential hazard.

## **Complaint Investigations**

The hazmat unit handles a wide range of complaints each year. They vary in nature from small residential spills of household chemicals and heating oil to large-scale industrial spills, fires, illegal dumping and over the road accidents involving cargo spills or release of motor vehicle fluids. In order to provide 24/7 coverage an additional seven staff members from various environmental programs within the health department routinely respond with and train with the hazmat unit staff and rotate for after-hours coverage.

Through a cooperative effort with the Health Department's household hazardous waste facility the hazmat staff routinely assists homeowners in identifying a great number of unknown chemicals before they are brought for disposal. The staff also routinely interacts with various branches of local and state government during initial or joint investigations. We are also involved with local health departments by providing them with guidance and assistance on environmental issues.

### **Complaint Composition Summary**

Fuel Storage Tanks	<b>19</b>
Motor Vehicle Accidents	<b>55</b>
Leaking Containers / Illegal Dumping	<b>25</b>
Sloppy Housekeeping	<b>29</b>
Waterway Spills / Sheens	<b>18</b>
Fuel Delivery Spills / Overfills	<b>9</b>
Chemical Reactions / Fires	<b>9</b>
Transformers	<b>9</b>
Identify Unknown Chemicals	<b>8</b>
Mercury Spills	<b>5</b>
Suspicious Package / Powder	<b>13</b>
Fumes/Odors	<b>8</b>
Biological	<b>4</b>
Pesticides	<b>4</b>
Medical Waste	<b>4</b>
Sewage Spills	<b>1</b>

## **Regulated Underground Storage Tank Enforcement Program**

In January 2006, the Health Department entered into an agreement with the DEP to conduct compliance monitoring/leak detection inspections of active regulated underground storage tanks (UST) under the CEHA Cooperative Agreement (CA) executed between both agencies. Under the program, the Health Dept. is authorized to investigate, on behalf of the DEP, all regulated USTs within Monmouth County and initiate appropriate enforcement actions which include issuing NOVs, coordinating delivery bans and cease use actions with the DEP, and coordinating and negotiating settlement agreements with violators in consultation with the DEP. We also provide compliance assistance and distribute materials provided by DEP to owners and operators of UST facilities.

In accordance with the agreement, the Health Dept. identified one key employee who is responsible to fulfill the duties, obligations, and standards found in the CA. In turn, the DEP provides \$62,821.00 of grant funding per year towards the salary of the key employee. In 2006, a limited amount of the grant funds were also allocated for the purchase of specialized field equipment and instrumentation needed to perform UST inspections.

During 2006, we performed inspections with DEP UST personnel under an extensive field training program. Upon receiving written certification of inspection experience and authorization from the DEP, the Health Dept. will be able to implement delivery bans, cease use actions, and negotiate penalty settlement agreements in coordination the DEP's Regional Field Office. We expect to have full authorization to perform these functions in the first quarter of 2007. All future penalties collected by the Health Dept. under the UST program will go directly into our Environmental Quality and Enforcement Fund.

### **Summary of 2006 UST Program Activity**

Facility Inspections	<b>76</b>
NOVs Issued	<b>43</b>
Delivery Ban	<b>14</b>
Cease Use Order	<b>2</b>
Facility Reinspections	<b>5</b>

## **Residential Storage Tanks**

The hazmat unit continues to be heavily involved in issues concerning residential underground and above ground storage tanks. We routinely handle cases involving leaking residential heating oil tanks. A total of 19 cases involving such tanks were handled during 2006. Technical assistance with tank removal or decommissioning is regularly provided to homeowners or potential homebuyers. Assistance is also provided for emergencies arising from spills or overfills of heating oil during delivery or above ground tank failures.

We also provide homeowners with assistance regarding the NJDEP voluntary cleanup program. The program's purpose is to oversee the cleanup of soil and/or ground water contamination at residential properties to ensure they are in accordance with NJDEP Technical Rules for Site Remediation. Homeowners enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the NJDEP to request Department oversight of all cleanup activities. Information on the program and most commonly asked questions including links to NJDEP are posted on the MCHD web site.

## **Contaminated Site List / Property Searches**

The hazmat unit is responsible for handling all requests for review of Health Dept. environmental records. Access to government records by private citizens is governed under the Open Public Records Act (OPRA). Requests for information come in as part of environmental Phase 1 investigations by private consultants or as individual inquiries from potential homebuyers and concerned citizens. Most lending institutions require an environmental background search on real estate transactions to document any past or current environmental issues.

A total of 283 such requests were processed through the hazmat unit in 2006. The requests seek information on specific properties regarding underground storage tanks, spills and illegal dumping, solid waste, air and water concerns as well as public health issues. In addition, a database of contaminated sites and leaking underground storage tanks is being maintained and updated with information provided to us by NJDEP. There are currently over 6,000 records of such sites in Monmouth County.

## **Continuing Education and Training**

Continuing education and training are essential parts of our mission to provide a comprehensive emergency preparedness system throughout Monmouth County. The Health Department's hazmat unit maintains some of the most highly trained hazmat/CBRNE response personnel in the State of New Jersey. In 2006, we continued

to expand our emergency response capability and competence by taking advantage of numerous federal, state, and local training opportunities.

Four of our senior members currently hold the credential of Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM). This prestigious credential is recognized throughout the country as the standard of excellence in the hazardous materials management profession. Our CHMMs have a national network of technical and educational information resources at their disposal. These networking opportunities allow them to increase their effectiveness and scope as hazardous materials managers and emergency responders.

In addition, several members of our staff hold instructor certifications for various hazmat/CBRNE training courses. In 2006, we continued our commitment to develop and present training courses on a variety of topics for local emergency responders in Monmouth County. All hazmat unit members must also maintain current certificates in fire fighting and/or industrial fire brigade, first responder and/or EMT, CPR/first aid and defibrillator (AED) certifications.

Training opportunities can take many forms, from informal “in-house” sessions to major full-scale exercises. Listed below are some of the highlights of our training program for 2006:

- WMD Incident Command, Center for Domestic Preparedness, Anniston, AL
- WMD Radiological/Nuclear course for Hazmat Technicians, Nevada Test Site.
- CAMEOfm Training Course, USEPA, Edison, NJ
- Senior Officials Workshop for Terrorism Incident Preparedness, USDHS
- Radioactive Isotope Identifier Operation, NJ State Police
- Monmouth County Jail Evacuation Drill, MC Sheriff's Office
- Impact of Traumatic Stress on Disaster Relief Volunteers, MCHD
- Liquid Natural Gas Properties, Handling, and Transportation - NJNG Co.
- American Safety and Health Institute First Responder Re-Certification
- Strategic National Stockpile Distribution Drill - MCHD
- Enhanced WMD Incident Management, Texas A&M University
- Advanced Preparation for Radiological Emergencies, NJDEP
- Confined Space Awareness Training, NJ State Police
- New Jersey Transit Bus Safety & Emergency Response – NJT, Howell
- Sampling for Hazardous Materials - USEPA, Edison, NJ
- Pandemic Influenza TTX – Fort Monmouth
- Wall OEM Emergency Response Drill
- Holmdel OEM Mass Decontamination Drill
- NJ American Water Co. Chlorine Emergency Response Drill
- Advanced Chemical/Biological Integrated Response Course – U.S. Army