

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs
Administration

[Notice No. 98-8]

Revision of the North American
Emergency Response Guidebook;
Notice of Public Meetings; Request for
CommentsAGENCY: Research and Special Programs
Administration (RSPA), DOT.ACTION: Notice of public meetings;
request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice advises interested persons that RSPA will conduct public meetings to discuss the development and publication of the year 2000 North American Emergency Response Guidebook (NAERG2000). NAERG2000 will supersede the 1996 North American Emergency Response Guidebook (NAERG96). The development of NAERG2000 is a joint effort involving the transportation agencies of the United States, Canada and Mexico. This notice solicits comments on the development of NAERG2000, particularly from those who have experience using NAERG96 during hazardous materials incidents.

DATES: Public Meetings. The first public meeting will be held on October 29, 1998, in Room 2230 of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. The second meeting will be February 4, 1999, in the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. The room number will be posted in the lobby of the Nassif Building on the day of the meeting. Meeting times are from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The public is invited to attend without advance notification.

Comments. Written comments should be submitted on or before November 23, 1998, to the Office of Hazardous Materials Initiatives and Training (DHM-50), Research and Special Programs Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001; comments may be faxed to (202) 366-7342; or e-mailed via the Internet to WELISTEN@rspa.dot.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Henry or Gigi Corbin, Research and Special Programs Administration (DHM-50), 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001; (202) 366-4900; Internet e-mail to David.Henry@rspa.dot.gov or Gigi.Corbin@rspa.dot.gov

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities or to request special assistance at the meetings, contact Scott Holland at (202) 366-0002 as soon as possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Federal hazardous materials transportation law, 49 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*, empowers the Secretary of Transportation to issue and enforce regulations deemed necessary to ensure the safe transport of hazardous materials. In addition, the law directs the Secretary of Transportation to provide law enforcement and fire fighting personnel with technical information and advice for meeting emergencies connected with the transportation of hazardous materials.

The Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) was developed by RSPA for use by emergency services personnel to provide guidance for initial response to hazardous materials incidents. Since 1980, it has been the goal of RSPA for all emergency response vehicles, including fire fighting, police and rescue squad vehicles, to carry a copy of the ERG. To accomplish this, RSPA has published six editions of the ERG and has distributed over six million copies to emergency services agencies, without charge.

NAERG2000 is being jointly developed by RSPA, Transport Canada and the Secretary of Communication and Transport of Mexico. NAERG2000 will supersede NAERG96 and will be published in English, French and Spanish for use by emergency response personnel throughout North America. Publication of NAERG2000 will facilitate transport of hazardous materials through North America and increase public safety by providing consistent emergency response procedures for hazardous materials incidents in North America. In order to continually improve the NAERG, RSPA actively solicits comments from interested parties, especially those who have experience using the NAERG during hazardous materials incidents.

Request for Comments

Comments are solicited on NAERG user concerns and on the following questions:

1. Have emergency responders experienced a problem of inconsistent guidance between NAERG96 and other sources of technical information? If so, in what way could NAERG2000 be revised to reduce inconsistencies?
2. Have emergency responders experienced confusion or difficulty in

understanding the scope or purpose of NAERG96? If so, in what way could NAERG2000 be revised to reduce this difficulty?

3. Have emergency responders experienced confusion or difficulty in understanding the application of NAERG96? If so, in what way could NAERG2000 be revised to reduce this difficulty?

4. How could the "Table of Initial Isolation and Protective Action Distances" or its introduction be made easier to comprehend and use?

5. In the "Table," does the distinction between day and night protective action distances add useful information for the first responder? How could the distinction be improved?

6. Could the "List of Dangerous Water-Reactive Materials" introduced in NAERG96 be enhanced or improved?

7. Have emergency responders experienced difficulty understanding the capabilities of chemical protective clothing, and the limitations of structural fire fighter's protective clothing in hazardous materials incidents? If so, in what way can NAERG2000 be revised to improve understanding?

8. Have any identification numbers (ID No.) been incorrectly assigned to a material (Name of Material)?

9. Has any identification number/material been assigned to the "wrong" guide? If so, please identify the material and the guide.

10. Are the responses on each guide appropriate for the material assigned to the guide?

11. Have emergency responders experienced difficulty with legibility of NAERG96's print style, format, or durability?

12. Have emergency response agencies experienced difficulty in obtaining copies of NAERG96 for their vehicles?

13. Besides the Table of Placards, should other pictorial information be included?

14. Are the terms listed in the Glossary defined satisfactorily?

15. Should additional terms be added to the Glossary?

Supporting data and analyses will enhance the value of comments submitted.

Alan I. Roberts,
Associate Administrator for Hazardous
Materials Safety.

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