OIL/HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RESPONSE TRAINING
FOR THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

Boeing Petroleum Services Inc., which manages, operates, and maintains the U.S. Department of Energy's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Texas and Louisiana, conducts quarterly emergency response training for members of each site's emergency response team (ERT). The training includes firefighting, CPR, first aid, security, and environmental skills, and is conducted at the Lamar University Fire Training grounds in Beaumont, Texas.

The environmental portion of this training, which covers oil and hazardous substance response, is coordinated and conducted by the Environmental Control Department of Boeing Petroleum Services, with assistance from Texas A&M's Texas Engineering and Extension Service during the hazardous substance response training.

During the oil spill response training segment, ERT members are given an opportunity to coordinate a full-scale response to a simulated spill on a major waterway. In these exercises, the Neches River near Port Neches is the scene for the simulated spills. During the exercises, simulated oil used includes oranges and peat, with notification to the local Coast Guard unit and state agencies before the exercises begin.

ERT members are required to establish a command center, designate an on-scene commander, and develop and implement a plan to control and contain the spill. All spill response equipment, that is, boats, boom, and response trailers, is available at the scene and is primarily response equipment from the SPR sites, which provides a measure of familiarity to the ERT members.

During each exercise, all aspects of the response are videotaped and the environmental personnel observe and monitor the planning and actions taken to control the spill. In addition, environmental personnel assume roles as irate landowners, state and federal agencies, and news media reporters who test the ERT members' abilities to effectively deal with such individuals during actual response activities. After completion of the field exercise, all ERT members meet in the classroom to view the videotape and discuss the exercise. During the discussions, the environmental personnel answer any questions pertaining to SPR spill response procedures and critique the actions taken during the spill response.

The potential of responding to hazardous substance emergencies as well as crude oil spills at SPR sites makes Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements in 29 CFR 1910.120(1) applicable to ERT members at the SPR sites. In response to these regulations, ERT members receive quarterly training totaling at least 24 hours per year in safe response procedures for hazardous substance spills.

A detailed list of all hazardous substances in use at the SPR was developed by the environmental personnel, and in conjunction with the Texas Engineering Extension Service, an SPR-specific training program is presented to the ERT members. The training involves classroom and field exercises that address:

- Properties of hazardous substances
- Toxicology
- Personal protective equipment
- Demonstrations of incompatible substances
- Container plugging and patching
- Product transfer
- Response to a simulated hazardous substance spill.

This aspect of the environmental training seeks to present an understanding of the potential dangers involved in storing and using such substances at the SPR sites and how to safely and effectively respond to emergencies involving such substances.

These types of spill response training have been well received by ERT members from all sites. It provides them the opportunity to establish a plan, assign responsibilities, and carry out their plan in the field in response to both oil and hazardous substance spills. The realistic scenarios created by the environmental control personnel, along with the videotape coverage, provide the realism that is reflected in the ERT members' response.