

Tabletop Exercise and Drill: Oil Spill and Emergency Response 101

Presented by:

**The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (OKDEQ)
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**



OKLAHOMA
Environmental
Quality

Access the Course Materials Page:

response.epa.gov/Oil_Exercise_TLEF_2026



Please take the Introductory Survey

Click [here](#) to access the survey



Introduction

Course Description

This four-hour exercise is an introductory/intermediate course on oil spills and emergency response presented by The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Superfund and Emergency Management (OSEM). The course will be delivered in three parts: (1) A presentation covering the statutory authorities that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses to respond to oil spills along with examples and case studies presented by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); (2) Oil response tabletop exercise focused on a gas station fuel spill. The scenario will feature a gas station oil spill as a severe thunderstorm moves into the area; (3) Putting theory into practice with a field exercise, participants will go out in the “field” (parking lot outside the hotel*) where The Choctaw Nation will lead a “spill drill.” Using The Choctaw oil spill trailer and spill equipment participants will observe what they just learned in action and see demonstrations of how the equipment is used.

Overall Course Objectives

The objectives for this training are as follows:

1. To increase participant’s knowledge of emergency response actions, and response preparedness. Participants will learn what immediate steps to take and who to contact following an incident, what resources and programs are available.
2. To provide participants with an understanding of the statutory authorities under which agencies may respond to environmental emergencies with real life examples.
3. To familiarize participants with steps and procedures they’d take immediately following a small-scale oil spill, who they’d notify, identify stakeholder/partners, understand when mutual aid agreements are applied, and be able to adapt to developing information during an incident.
4. To properly identify equipment used to respond to known spills/releases and how to utilize the equipment to contain and mitigate a small-scale spill appropriately.

Agenda

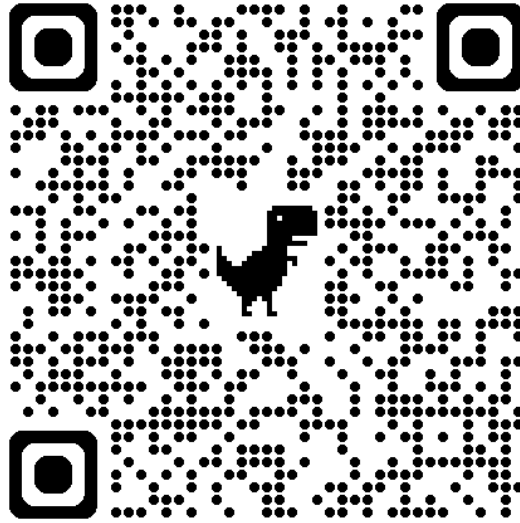
Part I : Emergency Response ~1 hour		
Intro		1:00 – 1:10pm (10 min)
Course Intro	Tracy Horst	
EPA Emergency Response	Ari Lippi, US EPA	1:10 – 1:40pm (30 min)
Case Study	Matt Wormus, OKDEQ	1:40 – 2:10pm (30 min)
Break		2:10 – 2:20pm (10 min)
Part II: Table Top Exercise ~1 hour, 30 min		
Tabletop and Scenario Overview	Ari Lippi	2:20 – 2:45pm (25 min)
Discussion	Group 1: Jeremy Noah Group 2: Matt Wormus Group 3: Lisa Denmark Group 4: Ari Lippi	2:45 – 3:30 pm (45 min)
Hotwash & Evaluation	Lisa Denmark	3:30 – 3:45 pm (15 min)
Wrap up	Ari Lippi	3:45 – 3:50 pm (5 min)
Break		3:50 – 4pm (10 min)
Part III: Spill Drill ~1 hour		
Spill Drill	Tracy Horst, and Jeremy Noah, The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	4pm – 5pm (1 hour)

Presenters

Name	Organization	Contact
Tracy Horst	The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	thorst@choctawnation.com
Jeremy Noah	The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	jeremyn@choctawnation.com
Matt Wormus	Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (OKDEQ)	matthew.wormus@deq.ok.gov
Lisa Denmark	US EPA, Region 3	denmark.lisa@epa.gov
Ari Lippi	US EPA, Office of Superfund & Emergency Management	lippi.ari@epa.gov

Part I: Presentation

Go to the [Documents section](#) of the course materials page.



Part II: Tabletop Training Exercise



OKLAHOMA
Environmental
Quality

Oil Spill Tabletop Exercise Situation Manual (SitMan) Tribal Land Environment Forum 2026

Presented by:

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (OKDEQ)
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Situation Manual

This Situation Manual (SitMan) is provided to all exercise participants as the primary reference for their roles. It offers a concise overview of what to expect, such as how the exercise will be conducted, its scope and schedule, and participant responsibilities. Players are encouraged to consult other relevant resources they need to fulfill their roles effectively.

Full Course Agenda

Topic	Presenter	Time
Introduction		1:00 – 1:10 pm (10 min)
EPA Emergency Response	Ari Lippi, US EPA	1:10 – 1:40 pm (30 min)
Case Study	Matt Wormus, OK DEQ	1:40 – 2:10 pm (30 min)
BREAK		2:10 – 2:20 pm (10 min)
Tabletop Exercise	Jeremy Noah, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Lisa Denmark, US EPA Matt Wormus, OK DEQ	2:20 – 4 pm (90 min)
Exercise overview, objectives, and structure		2:20 – 2:30 pm (10 min)
Scenario review		2:30 – 2:45 pm (15 min)
Discussion		2:45 – 3:30 pm (45 min)
Hotwash		3:30 – 3:45 pm (15 min)
Wrap-up & Survey		3:45 – 3:50 pm (5 min)
BREAK		3:50 – 4:00 pm (10 min)
Field Exercise	Tracy Horst and Jeremy Noah, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	4:00 – 5:00 pm (60 min)

Overview

Exercise Name	Oil Spill Tabletop Exercise
Exercise Dates/Times	Tribal Lands and Environment Forum (TLEF) August 17, 2026 1pm – 5pm CDT
Focus Area(s)	Emergency Response; Oil Spill Response
Threat or Hazard	Petroleum oil discharge into the Canadian River, impacting The Chickasaw Nation Reservation and surrounding OK counties
Scenario	Rupture of a valve on a tanker truck during fuel delivery at a gas station results in the release of 1,200 gallons of gasoline, impacting a nearby river and releasing vapor fumes
Sponsors	Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Participating Organizations	Participants in the Tribal Lands and Environment Forum (TLEF) Conference, 2026
Point of Contact	Ari Lippi Email: lippi.ari@epa.gov Phone: (202) 566-0182

Exercise Objectives and Capabilities

Table 1 outlines the exercise objectives. These objectives are connected to the planning and operational capabilities of Tribal, state, and federal environmental emergency response professionals.

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

Exercise Objectives	Capability
Develop initial incident response strategies following a tribal dispatch/911 call including identifying, assessing, and addressing hazards posed to the public, responders, and environment, and tribal priorities.	Environmental Response/Health and Safety
Identify notification and communication needs Including being able to share incident information and establish (and maintain) a common operating picture (COP) of the incident among cooperating organizations.	Operational Communication
Understand broader mutual aid/coordination components immediately following an incident including identifying technical support personnel and specialized resources to assist safe/effective operations, as needed.	Operational Coordination
Be able to take on new information during an incident and adjust response plans to ensure protection of people and natural resources.	Functional capacity and flexibility

Structure

The Tabletop Exercise (TTX) portion of the event is a facilitated, discussion-based exercise. During the TTX, participants will be led in an informal group discussion involving a fictional emergency response scenario. Participant discussions will facilitate development of potential solutions to issues via a group-oriented, problem-solving process. All participants will represent their own respective jurisdictions.

After group discussions, participants will engage in a moderated hotwash discussion, in which they will have the opportunity to identify lessons learned, areas for improvement/gaps in knowledge/capability, and best practices.

Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will proceed in an open, no-fault environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., based on real response assets and staffing levels) and insights derived from your training and experiences.
- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve response efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.
- Not every issue/problem can be discussed exhaustively. To achieve overall objectives, the facilitators may move the group to subsequent questions once the key points have been covered. Please, trust your facilitator.
- Exercise participant safety takes priority over exercise play. The experience and knowledge gained in an exercise is not worth risking the safety of those involved. The following general requirements apply to the exercise:
 - For immediate emergency services call 911.
 - For an emergency that requires assistance, use the phrase “real-world emergency.”

Participant Roles

There are two primary participant roles for this TTX – players and facilitators. Below is description of each role.

- **Players** respond to the situation presented in the TTX based on their knowledge of current authority, responsibility, capability, plans, and procedures within their organization.
- **Facilitators** run the TTX scenario, pose questions for players to answer, and control and direct the pace of the exercise.

Ground Rules

- Raise your hand when you would like to speak
- Identify your name and organization each time you speak
- Voice opinions openly
- Stay on point and confine discussions to the topic at hand
- Allow everyone an opportunity to speak
- Avoid side conversations
- Define acronyms

Tabletop Exercise

Initial Incident

It is Monday afternoon on August 17, and temperatures hover at 95°F with a heat index near 100°F. Isolated thunderstorms are building to the west. On the border of Oklahoma City and Newcastle along US Route 44, there is a privately owned gas station named “Leaky LLC¹” within the Chickasaw Nation Reservation that sits atop a hill 0.15 miles from the Canadian River which is classified as a Water of the US (WOTUS).

At 2:35 p.m. a large tank truck carrying over 100 barrels of gasoline arrives for a fuel delivery. As it is pulling into Leaky LLC, it rolls over some road debris which causes a puncture in one of the tanker compartments breaking a valve, and it releases over 1,200 gallons onto the road and into the parking lot. Vapors intensify in the heat, customers abandon vehicles at the pumps and call 911 as a visible sheen spreads toward the Canadian River.

Figure 1. Chickasaw Nation within the state of Oklahoma



¹ This is a fictional company. Any resemblance to an actual company is purely coincidental.

Figure 2. Leaky LLC location along Canadian River (bottom)²



Initial Response: State and Local

- The 911 operators notify the National Response Center (NRC) and The City of Oklahoma Fire Department.
- The City of Oklahoma Fire Department arrives within 15 minutes. They secure the leak, establish a hot zone, block traffic, and order evacuations of the nearby apartment complex.
- The Fire Department calls in the Oklahoma City HazMat team who arrive in another 30 minutes with their spill trailer. The Team applies vapor-suppressing foam to reduce ignition and to place absorbent booms and sand berms to prevent product from reaching the river.
- The following agencies are notified of the incident: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Oklahoma State EOC, The Oklahoma Department of Homeland Security, and The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (OKDEQ).

² Figures 1 and 2 have been generated for the purpose of a fictional exercise and are not intended to be used in any real-life decision making or emergency response actions.

Figure 3. Example of an oil sheen on water³ (left), Fig.4 Example of an oil boom⁴(right)



Initial Response: Federal

- EPA determines that as the Canadian River is classified as WOTUS and within the inland zone, and the spill falls under EPA jurisdiction.
- EPA deploys a federal On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) to the site to assess conditions.
- The EPA OSC and EPA contractors arrive within a few hours. After the fire department determines that there is no risk of explosion and begin air monitoring around the station, an adjacent apartment complex, and along the river.

Fig 5. Example of working with boom on cleanup actions⁵



³ Photo courtesy of EPA. https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=8173

⁴ Photo courtesy of EPA. This image has been taken from an archived material. https://archive.epa.gov/emergencies/content/fss/web/pdf/c_oskins2_04.pdf

⁵ Photo courtesy of EPA. https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=16837

Recovery

- The EPA OSC provides oversight, and contractors continue cleanup actions by applying sorbents to the oil contained by the boom which absorbs the oil for it to be disposed of. Together they've recovered an estimated 800 gallons of oil and contaminated absorbents by nightfall.
- The next day, OKDEQ samples at outfalls and downstream locations. OKDEQ continues to conduct downstream testing along with Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.
- Air monitoring returns to background levels, and road closures are scaled back. OKDEQ oversees continued cleanup of the forecourt and storm infrastructure, with follow-up sampling scheduled for the channel after the next rainfall.

Fig. 6 – Examples of water sampling, OKDEQ⁶



⁶ Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. <https://oklahoma.gov/deq/divisions/state-environmental-laboratory-services/sample-collection-assistance.html>

Discussion:

You will be separated into groups to discuss how to respond to the incident described in the scenario. Your group discussion will be led by one of the presenters who will review three key categories: Initial incident, Notifications, and Mutual aid/coordination. If your group moves through all three of those themes, you will discuss the bonus categories.

1. Initial Incident

1. What hazards are posed to the public and responders? Determine the relative priority of the following incident objectives. Add objectives, as desired.
 - a. Hazard Mitigation
 - b. Risk Communications / Emergency Public Information and Warning
 - c. Public Health/Safety
 - d. Responder Health/Safety
 - e. Local Cultural Awareness
 - f. Environmental Health
 - g. Fire/Explosion Prevention.
2. Among the organizations in your group, what “automatic response actions” and/or protective actions (personnel and deployment of equipment) would be taken once your organization is notified of the incident?
3. What resources would you need to accomplish those response and protective actions?

2. Notifications

4. How would the NRC and Federal agencies be notified?
5. Who are the critical partners and stakeholders, and how will information be shared with them? What are the partner/stakeholder capabilities? What are their assets and limitations?
6. Will you need to draw up mutual aid agreements? When would be an ideal time to do so?

!! New Information !!

While clean up actions are ongoing, a fast-moving, severe flash storm begins moving toward the site. These types of storms are common across Oklahoma and often bring brief, but heavy rainfall. The rapid movement of water threatens to wash more of the spilled oil into the Canadian River, less than 250 feet downhill.

3. Mutual Aid/Coordination

7. How are real-time assessment data (e.g., water/air/soil sampling results) used to develop incident objectives for the next operation period? Will the initial response priorities change?
8. What is your process for coordinating development and sharing of key situational awareness products with response agencies?
9. What specialized resources are needed, if any, to execute your group's chosen strategy?

Bonus Questions!

10. How would the incident response be different if the source of contamination was a chemical?
11. What are the expected environmental impacts (short- and long-term) of such an incident?
12. How would the response actions be different if the gas station was under a fee structure vs if the gas station was tribally owned?
13. How would response strategies be different if it were under different jurisdictions? (i.e. if the spill occurred on state land with downstream impacts to a Tribe, EPA led, state led, etc.)

14. Hotwash

Immediately following the completion of exercise play, the facilitator will moderate a hotwash with players. The player hotwash is a meeting that provides an opportunity to discuss exercise strengths and areas for improvement immediately following the conduct of an exercise.

1. How ready do you feel your organization is for an oil response?
2. How would your organization assess your capabilities to an incident of this type?
3. What Lessons have you learned from this exercise?
4. What are the gaps in knowledge or needed improvements you noticed for your organization?

NOTE: This TTX is a fictional exercise that poses a plausible real-life scenario in the state of Oklahoma. Other US states and EPA regions may respond to incidents differently. Contact your state EPA regional office for more information:

<https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-hotlines#region-specific-customer-service-lines>

EXERCISE EVALUATION

Thank you for attending! Please take a few minutes to complete the course evaluation. This will help us improve this course and give us insight for future trainings. Click [here](#) to access the survey.



Part III: Spill Drill by The Choctaw Nation

Please note that this portion of the course takes place outdoors. The temperature in Oklahoma City in August can reach over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Bring bottled water, sunscreen, hats and other protection as appropriate.

1. Course Overview:

- Spill kit inventory and equipment use overview
- Emergency Response Guidebook overview
- Emergency Spill Notification Flow Chart review
- Four-Step Spill Response Process
- Hands-on spill response exercise
- Spill Response Trailer Walk-Thru
- Closing

2. Regulatory References:

- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 (Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response)
- EPA 40 CFR 112.7 (Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure)
- EPA 40 CFR 122.26 (Stormwater Discharges)
- EPA 40 CFR 263.30 (Hazardous Waste Transportation – General Requirements)
- EPA 40 CFR 263.31 (Hazardous Waste Transportation – Packaging)

3. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to:

- Identify the components and purpose of a spill kit.
- Explain the purpose and basic use of the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG).
- Participate in a scenario using Choctaw Nation's Four-Step Spill Response Process.
- Demonstrate proper response procedures for a simulated known petroleum spill.
- Recognize situations that require evacuation and notification of trained emergency responders.

4. Training Equipment Needed:

☐ Spill Response Trailer	☐ Water Faucet Key	☐ Emergency Response Guide Book (ERG)
☐ Training Spill Kit	☐ Water Hose	☐ Emergency Spill Notification Flow Chart
☐ Water Dye	☐ Emergency Response Call Tree	☐ Spill Data Collection Report
☐ Water Source	☐ Safety Cones	☐ Tribal Dispatch Environmental Emergency Response Call Tree

5. Safety Statement:

This course provides Awareness-Level Spill Response Training. Personnel are expected to respond only to known petroleum product spills that can be safely controlled using available spill response equipment. Personnel shall NOT attempt to respond to unknown chemicals, hazardous material emergencies, fires, explosions, or incidents beyond their level of training.

Known Spill Clarification: A release involving a product that is positively identified (gasoline, diesel, hydraulic oil, motor oil, coolant, etc.), presents no fire or health hazard beyond the capability of awareness-level personnel, and can be safely controlled using available spill response equipment.

6. Instructor Opening (Example)

"You may be called upon to respond to an accidental spill or release involving petroleum products during your daily operations. Your actions during the first few minutes of an incident can significantly reduce the impact on personnel, tribal property, surrounding communities, and the environment.

Today's training will familiarize you with the Choctaw Nation Spill Response Trailer, spill response equipment, notification procedures, and the Four-Step Spill Response Process. You will also participate in a practical exercise designed to reinforce these concepts."

7. Spill Kit Familiarization

Note: Spill kit contents may vary depending on facility hazards, chemical inventory, operational needs, and budget.

5-Gallon Spill Kit (Yellow Pail)	95-Gallon Spill Kit (White Drum)
Pail with lid	55-Gallon Overpack Drum
Absorbent Pads	Absorbent Pads
Absorbent Socks	3" × 48" Absorbent Socks
Disposal Bags	3" × 10" Absorbent Socks
Waste Labels	Absorbent Pillows
Instructions	Instructions

8. Absorbent Materials

- Absorbent Socks - Used to contain and divert spills before they spread.
- Absorbent Pads - Used to absorb spilled liquids; subject to high winds.
- Absorbent Pillows - Used for larger volumes of liquid.
- Dry Absorbent - Used to absorb and solidify remaining liquids after containment.
- Absorbent Booms - Floating barriers used to contain and control the spread of oil on the surface of water during spills, making cleanup easier and limiting environmental damage.

9. Spill Kit Color Coding Examples (Common Spill Kits Used by Choctaw Nation)

Universal Kit (Blue/Gray Absorbents)	White Absorbents
Oil	Oil and petroleum products only
Diesel	Repels water
Gasoline	Ideal for outdoor petroleum spills
Water	
Coolants	
Solvents	

10. Emergency Response Guidebook (EGR) – Current Version 2024

The instructor will provide a brief overview of:

- Purpose of the ERG
- Placards (Page 8-9); Railcars (Page 10-11); Road Trailers (Page 14-15)
- Yellow Pages (ID Number)
- Blue Pages (Product Name)
- Orange Guides
- Green Pages
- Isolation and Protective Action Distances
- The ERG is intended to assist first responders during the initial phase of hazardous materials incidents.

11. Choctaw Nation Spill Notification Process

Present Emergency Spill Notification Flow Chart and Spill Data Collection Report.

12. Four-Step Spill Response Process

A. Emergency Reporting

- Establish the Lead Representative.
- Notify 911 and or Tribal Dispatch using the Spill Notification Flow Chart.
- Conduct personnel accountability (number of personnel responding to spill).

B. Protect

- Wear appropriate PPE (minimum nitrile gloves).
- Evacuate bystanders uphill/upwind for known spills; crosswind and uphill/upwind for unknown spills.
- Isolate or shutoff ignition sources.
- Establish a safety perimeter using cones or barrier tape. As last option, can utilize personnel equipped with hi-vis safety vests, facing toward traffic, to block entry.
- Prevent unnecessary exposure.

C. Contain and/or Stop the Spill

Before taking action, ask:

- Do I know what the product is?
- Is it safe to approach?
- Is there a fire or explosion hazard?
- Do I have proper PPE?
- Can the spill be safely controlled?

If the answer is NO to any question:

- Evacuate.
- Notify emergency responders.
- Do not attempt cleanup.
- If safe to proceed:
 - Stop the source if possible.
 - Protect nearby storm drains.
 - Protect waterways and soil.
 - Deploy absorbent socks around the spill.
 - Use absorbent pads and pillows to recover spilled product.
 - May utilize dry absorbent to absorb, dam/dike/divert, or contain spill.

D. Disposal and Decontamination

- Account for all personnel.
- Collect contaminated absorbents.
- Dispose of waste in accordance with procedures, applicable tribal environmental regulations and or RCRA requirements. Used oil absorbents may be placed in a properly marked non-hazardous waste container.
- Remove PPE safely and dispose of properly.
- Wash exposed skin with soap and water.
- Follow SDS, SPCC, or ERG recommendations when additional decontamination is required.

13. Practical Exercise

Given a simulated spill scenario, a spill kit, and appropriate PPE, participants will demonstrate the Four-Step Spill Response process by safely reporting, protecting, containing, and disposing of a known spill with minimal instructor guidance.

14. Closing

- Question and Answer Session
- Participants are encouraged to complete the EPA/ODEQ/Choctaw EPS training evaluation by scanning the QR code to be posted on Spill Response Trailer.

Four-Step Spill Response Process:

Emergency Reporting

Y	N	Established Lead Representative (Ranking on scene facility member or subject matter expert)
Y	N	Initiated emergency reporting/notifications (Flow Chart/Reporting Form/Call Tree)
Y	N	Personnel Accountability conducted (number of personnel responding to spill)

Protect

Y	N	Donned proper protective clothing (minimum nitrile gloves)
Y	N	Evacuated nonessential personnel. Known Spill - uphill and upwind; Unknown Spill – crosswind/uphill/upwind).
Y	N	Established safety cordon (block entry/egress points using cones, caution tape, loud voice, or personnel equipped with hi-vis safety vest facing traffic).

Contain and/or Stop the Spill

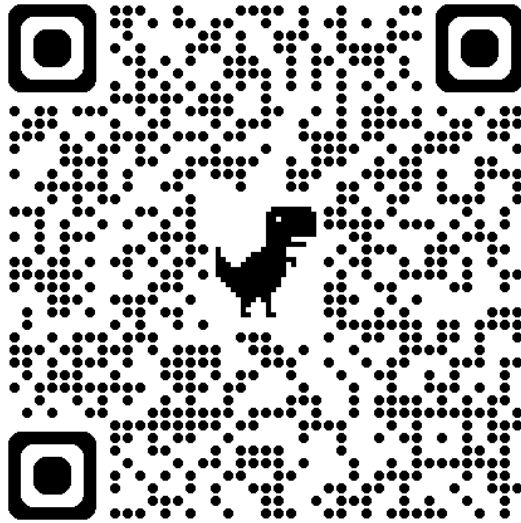
Y	N	Assessed the spill and any safety risk
Y	N	Identify the liquid (Unknown – Remain out of Area or Evacuate); Reference ERG
Y	N	Decided on Emergency Action Plan: Offensive, Defensive, Both or Evacuation
Y	N	Lead Representative reminds CNO Associates to stay out of product or limit exposure
Y	N	Stopped or shutoff ignition sources within the affected area (vehicles, power equip, smoking)
Y	N	Stopped/contained spill (protect drains, soil, and water sources); Evacuate if required.

Disposal And Decontamination

Y	N	Personnel Accountability conducted
Y	N	Placed used absorbents in properly marked “Non-Hazardous Waste” container
Y	N	Stand-down safety cordon
Y	N	Performed self-decontamination as needed (Reference available SPCC, SDS or ERG recommendations); minimum water and soap. Some products may require 0.5% bleach water solution.

RESOURCES/MORE INFO

Go to the Supplemental Materials in the [Documents section](#) of the course materials page for more information.



Thank you!



OKLAHOMA
Environmental
Quality