



Emergency Response

Pipelines are the safest and most reliable means of transporting large volumes of crude oil, natural gas and liquid petroleum products. Pipeline incidents are rare considering our member companies operate 110,000 kilometres of pipelines. In 2011, the transmission pipeline industry in Canada moved 1.2 billion barrels of liquid petroleum products and 5.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Our most recent statistics show that 99.99% of liquid products are transported safely.

Despite being the safest way to transport oil and gas products over long distances, no pipeline is completely risk-free. Unfortunately incidents, from time-to-time, do occur and when this happens, pipeline operators are trained and required to manage these emergency situations. With an effective emergency response plan (ERP) in place, the chances of long-term impacts on the community and the environment are greatly reduced.

What is a pipeline emergency? A pipeline emergency is an unforeseen incident that could endanger the health, safety or welfare of the public and the environment.

What is an emergency response plan? An ERP outlines the necessary steps and decisions required to manage an emergency situation. It contains specific steps that the pipeline operator must take in order to control the incident. Pipeline operators are expected to have ERPs in place by the regulator, whose role is to review and audit these plans. An ERP contains many types of information critical in managing an emergency situation. It includes manuals on how to proceed with the deployment of emergency personnel, evacuation plans, location of access points, communications procedures and protocols. In the case of large incidents, many pipeline operators use the Incident Command System (ICS), which is an organizational structure used for the command, control and coordination of an emergency response. ICS was originally developed in response to a series of wildfires in southern California in the 1970s.



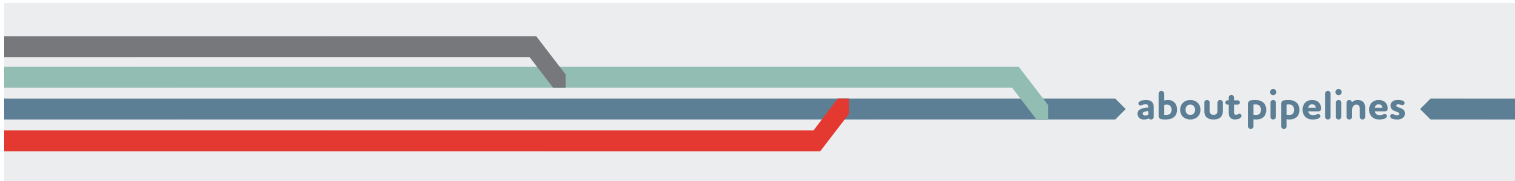
Figure 2: Workers use vacuums to clean up oil



Figure 1: Workers undergo safety training

"Emergency Response Plans are critical to ongoing pipeline operations. They allow pipeline operators to respond effectively to any emergency that could impact the public and the environment."

Ziad Saad
Vice President,
Safety & Sustainability
Canadian Energy
Pipeline Association



What key factors need to be considered by the pipeline operator? Managing an emergency is a complex and critically important matter. Pipeline operators make many decisions to address an emergency. For example, in the case of a spill, some of the key factors include: proximity to residences, waterways and wildlife, protecting the aquatic habitat if the spill occurred in a waterway, the amount and type of hydrocarbon released and how to handle it, weather conditions, anticipated behaviour of the hydrocarbon, resource and equipment requirements, the amount of time it will take to get key personnel on-site, site accessibility, containment sites and control points. These are just a few of the factors that pipeline operators must consider and the ERP must address.

What are the steps required to manage a pipeline incident on-site? While pipeline operators may have slightly different procedures, the most important aspect of responding to an emergency is determining how to safely conduct an emergency response while at the same time containing and reducing the risk to the public and the environment. These steps could include: protecting property, identifying and managing the site, evaluating the hazards and risks, selecting the appropriate protective clothing and equipment, managing information and resource coordination, implementing response objectives, decontaminating, and cleaning up the site.

How are emergency response plans reviewed and kept up-to-date?

Emergency response plans are developed, regularly reviewed and updated, as required, by the pipeline operator and submitted to the appropriate regulator. Pipeline operators conduct regular emergency response exercises, consult with agencies that are involved in emergency response procedures and inform everyone who may be associated with an emergency response activity of the practices and procedures to be followed. In addition, companies conduct outreach activities to inform nearby residents of what to do in the case of a pipeline emergency.



Figure 3: Workers use booms in safety training exercises

For more information on emergency response plans, please visit:

- Canadian Energy Pipeline Association – www.aboutpipelines.com
- National Energy Board – www.neb-one.gc.ca
- Energy Resources Conservation Board – www.ercb.ca
- Incident Command System Canada – www.icscanada.ca
- Pipeline Association for Public Awareness – www.pipelineawareness.org
- Individual pipeline company websites

"Emergency Response Plans provide useful roadmaps for first responders to work side-by-side with pipeline operators during an emergency."

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