

Aiken/Barnwell County Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program

Exercise Report ABTEPP 2001

Multiple Vehicle Accident
Involving Radioactive Materials on
Aiken and Barnwell Counties Line



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Introduction

Background

In July of 2000, a meeting was held between Aiken County Emergency Services and Barnwell County Emergency Services, Savannah River Site representatives and members of the South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Division to initiate development of a Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program (TEPP) Exercise for the area. The exercise and associated training was designed to be a joint effort involving Aiken and Barnwell counties, with State of South Carolina, and U.S. Department of Energy/Westinghouse Savannah River Company providing support and training for the exercise.

The joint exercise, dubbed ABTEPP 2001 (Aiken/Barnwell Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program) involved responders from Aiken and Barnwell Counties Emergency Management, Aiken and Barnwell Counties E-911 Dispatch Centers, Windsor and Williston Fire Departments, Williston Rescue Squad, Barnwell Rescue Squad, Aiken County Emergency Medical Services, Rural-Metro Ambulance Service, The Barnwell County Hospital, The Aiken County Hazmat Team, The Savannah River Site DOE Radiological Assistance Program Team (RAP), the Aiken and Barnwell Counties Coroners, Aiken County Sheriff's Office, South Carolina Department of Transportation, South Carolina Highway Patrol, South Carolina DOT Transportation Police. Additional support was provided by the Aiken County School Bus Maintenance Department, the Aiken County Fire Fighters Association, The U.S. Department of Energy, and Westinghouse Savannah River Company.

An exercise plan and schedule was developed. The Exercise plan included briefing presentations providing an overview of the ABTEPP Exercise Plan. Briefings were conducted with the Aiken County Local Emergency Planning Committee, Aiken and Barnwell County Fire Chiefs Association's, and Aiken County Firefighters Association. The exercise plan included a section on identifying necessary training to ensure that responders will be prepared to respond and mitigate a transportation incident involving radioactive materials. The exercise plan identified the following needed training: Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT) Incident Command System, Mass Casualty and Bus Extrication. The training was offered to all agencies involved. In addition to the aforementioned training three tabletop exercises training sessions were conducted prior to the major drill executed on March 10, 2001.

The exercise scenario was a collision between a school bus and a Tractor-trailer carrying a simulated Type B Spent Nuclear Fuel Container. The impact caused the school bus rollover on its side just off the shoulder of the road, and the 18 Wheel truck and trailer remained upright, however, was also just off the shoulder of the road. As a result of the accident the tractor portion of the 18-wheeler caught fire. The truck driver sustained injuries and 12 of the students on the bus were hurt. The accident also resulted in six fatalities. There was no breach of the Type B Spent Nuclear Fuel Cask.

Agencies responding to the event arrived in a timely fashion, with high levels of cooperation between agencies from the two counties.

The exercise was observed by officials from various county, states and federal agencies and members of the South Carolina Legislature.

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Executive Summary

Seven objectives were selected from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Program Manual on Hazardous Materials Exercise Evaluation Methodology (HM-EEM). In the opinion of the Controller/evaluators, all seven objectives were met.

The Exercise Controller/Evaluation Team identified several noteworthy practices that the various agencies can continue to build upon. However, the exercise also identified several areas needing improvement. The major strengths and improvement items noted by controller/evaluators are:

Recognized Strengths

- Mass casualty process was very efficient
- Interface and communications between responding agencies was good
- Identified the need for and requested necessary resources (SC and Aiken County hazmat team and radiological assistance program team)
- Response actions were timely and based on the dot emergency response guidebook

Improvement Items:

- Communication between dispatch and responding agencies can be improved (incident location and route of response)
- Determine the need to adopt and implement a standardized county-wide responder accountability system
- Recognize the need for and wear personal protective equipment while conducting rescue operations

In summary, the ABTEPP 2001 provided response agencies from two counties with an opportunity to train and perform together in a large exercise that involved responders from fire, emergency medical service, public safety and hazardous materials departments. All of the participants conducted themselves in a highly professional manner. Cooperation was excellent, and while there were areas for improvement identified, all of the significant objectives of the exercises were met, in full.

Objectives, Improvements Items and Noteworthy Practices

The objectives listed below are based on a simulated transportation (highway) accident involving radioactive materials and should be performed in accordance with the appropriate state, county and local community procedures and according to the standards and limits outlined in each respective extent of play. The numbering system employed for the objectives is based on the objective numbers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazardous Materials Exercise Evaluation Methodology (HM-EEM); the objectives are not in sequential order.

Objective 1: Initial Notification of Response Agencies and Response Personnel

Demonstrate the ability to notify response agencies and to mobilize emergency personnel.

Expected Extent of Play:

This objective will be demonstrated by each participating response agency as it would in an actual emergency. All appropriate primary or back-up communications systems (radio, cell phone, landline, etc.) will be used during the exercise as in an actual emergency.

The exercise will be initiated by contacting both Aiken and Barnwell County E-911 Centers and reporting the simulated accident location. All appropriate federal/state/county and local response agencies agreeing to participate should be appropriately notified and should respond. All response units should be timed from receipt of emergency notification to arrival on scene.

Personnel/units should be deployed, real-time, to the accident scene based on accident conditions relayed via the notifications systems. Responding units will not transit in an "emergency mode" (i.e., no lights and sirens) and should not take and/or perform any action that impacts the general public, such as establishing road blocks or detours at or near the simulated incident scene unless it is necessary for participant safety.

Objective 1 - Initial Notification of Response Agencies and Response Personnel - Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Directions for responding agencies were incomplete. Although initial information from the Incident Commander failed to indicate the size of the truck cab fire, and the possibility of a mass casualty situation due to the number of casualties associated with the school bus, or the potential for exposure at the Highway 78 and Hull Road junction, such information should have been extracted by the dispatch personnel. Better questioning techniques by dispatch personnel could have improved the quality of response and the increased safety of the responders.

Not all responding agencies were advised of the identified entry routes to the scene. Consequently several response vehicles entered the scene through a potential hot zone.

Noteworthy Practices:

Inter-county transfer of information was well executed. Since the initial call for help was received by cell phone, recognition of the location of the accident as indefinable by jurisdiction and assessment of the potential scope of the accident, transfer of the call for mutual aid was executed in a timely and appropriate fashion. Considerable interagency traffic was well controlled by both dispatch agencies. Radio traffic was orderly and effective.

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Objective 2: Direction and Control

Demonstrate the ability to direct, coordinate, and control emergency response activities through operation of an Incident Command System (ICS) and other direction and control structures.

Extent of Play:

This objective will be demonstrated by the arrival and assumption of the Incident Commander (IC) position by the first responding unit/personnel, as it would be in an actual emergency. The position and responsibility of the IC should be transferred to the senior response officer upon arrival, and a status turnover will be conducted. A visible command post, communication system, accountability system, and organizational structure will be established. The IC shall demonstrate the capability to establish.

Objective 2: Direction and Control - Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Accident scene accountability was generally good. However, the accountability system/procedure currently in use by Aiken and Barnwell Counties is not adequate to encompass major scenes involving multiple agencies and disciplines. All responding agencies should consider the need for a uniform accountability system that includes accountability of non-department responders as well as multi-county incident control.



Noteworthy Practices:

It must be noted that all but three of the fifteen agencies responding to the call were volunteer organizations responsible for large rural areas. Although generally unaccustomed to handling large scale, multi-agency events, the Incident Scene Command staff handled themselves in a professional

Objective 3: Incident Assessment

Demonstrate the ability to identify the hazardous materials involved in an incident/accident and assess the hazards associated with the material involved during both the emergency and post-emergency phases.

Extent of Play:

This objective will be demonstrated by the active assessment of the incident hazards by the IC, including a preliminary observational survey of possible personnel injuries; physical hazards at the accident site; material released; extent if release; release receptors, and hazards associated with the materials. The initial assessment information will be obtained from placards, shipping documents, labeling, information, and the 2000 Emergency Response Guidebook. Based on the preliminary observational assessment, a determination of further resources to physically assess the incident site will then be made. If resources are available, further physical assessment should occur. If local resources are not available for further assessment, requests for assistance will be made as appropriate (State Response Team or other higher level technical responders).

Objective 3: Incident Assessment - Met

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Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

None Noted

Noteworthy Practices:

Initial entry Fire attack team recognized the potential danger of radiation, but as outlined in the Emergency Response Guidebook dealt with the primary hazard of burning fire in the truck cab, and saw to the safety of the driver and the acquisition of the shipping papers. As noted later in this report, the initial entry team maintained their location warning off other response personnel until radiation/contamination monitoring could be conducted to determine the safety of the area.

Communications from the initial fire attack team to Incident Scene Command was constant, and informative. All actions taken were executed in a safe and professional manner.

The Incident Commander utilized shipping paper information to contact the Department of Energy Emergency Operations Center (24-Hour Point of Contact) and through them, requested assistance of the DOE RAP Team. The Incident Commander also notified Aiken County 911 Dispatch Operations to Tone Alert the Aiken County HAZMAT Team for response.

Objective 4: Resource Management

Demonstrate the ability to mobilize and manage resources required for an emergency.

Extent of Play:

This objective will be demonstrated by determining the resources required for the response as a result of the incident assessment. Once the resources required are determined, proper notification and mobilization will occur. Additional resources should be integrated into the response effort by the Incident Commander.

Objective 4: Resource Management - Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Incident Command failed to notify Aiken County 911 Dispatch Operations of the size of the cab fire, and that the incident was a possible mass casualty situation. While this became obvious as more resources were requested, certain medical protocols were never implemented to address a mass casualty incident. Incident Command assumed responsibility for notifications (nuclear materials shipment) that could have been handled by dispatch personnel.



Noteworthy Practices:

The Incident Commander effectively utilized every available resource from State Highway Patrol to fire and EMS agencies from adjoining county to mitigate the incident. Appropriate notification was given to Department of Energy officials concerning the involvement of a spent nuclear fuel shipment in an accident. Teamwork was fully

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coordinated through Incident Commander with little difficulty in coordination. It is noteworthy that individual volunteer organizations from separate counties and fire districts worked together under a single command structure.

Equally noteworthy were the individual organizations, which within themselves maintained a command structure that guided each individual activity whether patient care, or fire control, in a safe and well-organized manner. Regardless of the portion of the scenario being observed, safety and command/control were obvious and well executed.

Objective 5: Communication

Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain communications essential to support response to an incident/accident.

Extent of Play:

This objective will be demonstrated by establishing and maintaining communication between all resources activated for the response. All appropriate primary or back-up communications systems (radio, cell phone, land-line, etc.) will be used during the drill as in an actual emergency. A communications system between response personnel should be established on-scene by the Incident Commander, as well as off-scene communications to local, state, federal, shipper, transportation and contract resources.



Objective 5: Communication - Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Information flow from Incident Commander to dispatch in the early moments of the scenario lacked important points of information:

- The size of the cab fire was not reported.
- The scene was not reported as a possible mass casualty incident
- Safe ingress route to avoid potential radiation hot zone was not clearly conveyed to dispatch
- Owner notification was handled at the scene via cell phone rather than through dispatch.
- Cell phone communications at the site were marginal.

Noteworthy Practices:

On-scene communications were handled in an orderly and disciplined fashion. The Incident Command post had access to all of the various agency frequencies and communications across agency lines was well done. It should be noted that the availability of frequencies is limited in both Aiken and Barnwell counties. In spite of complete and adequate on-scene communications, regular emergency communications were not impacted.

In all cases noted, actions to be taken in the “field” were cleared with Incident Command in keeping with good emergency protocol.

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Objective 10: Response Personnel Safety

Demonstrate the ability to protect emergency responder health and safety.

Extent of Play:

This objective should be demonstrated by the establishment, by the site safety officer, of one or more control zones to regulate the movement of personnel throughout the site; determination and usage of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); and usage of appropriate monitoring equipment for site hazards.

Objective 10: Response Personnel Safety – Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Incident Command opted to relinquish site safety to each individual organization responding to the incident scene. This left the Incident Commander without adequate control of personnel accountability on an individual basis.

Some organizations did not adhere to good safety practices, by omitting use of personal protective equipment (gloves and safety glasses) in a hazardous area. Medical care providers were observed extricating patients without eye or hand protection. On one occasion patients in the triage area were briefly left unattended so care providers could assist in extrication operations.



Initial entry by Aiken County HAZMAT Team Decon personnel failed to monitor the area, or establish the hot zone boundary. This was the result of a miscommunication that the fire personnel had already established such a point. The fire responders had established the 160' boundary as outlined by the Emergency Response Guidebook not a hot zone line. The Aiken County HAZMAT decontamination team recognized and corrected the problem.

Noteworthy Practices:

Accountability of organizations and individuals passing through Incident Command was well executed.

Williston Rescue Squad and the Williston Fire Department performed in an exceptionally safe manner, coordinating all efforts on the scene with a “buddy” system in place, safety lines laid and several meetings at each step in the extrication process to review the procedure and insure every person knew their assignment.

Windsor Fire Department personnel, upon completion of the fire attack recognized that they were in a potential hot zone and reported that information to the Incident Commander. The fire attack personnel established a boundary as outlined in the Emergency Response Guidebook and remained in the area, warning others of the potential hazard, and reported the contents of the shipping papers to the Incident Commander. While there was no breach to the Type B Spent Nuclear Fuel container, the fire personnel had no equipment to establish this fact and waited for a monitoring team before leaving the area of potential contamination.

Aiken County HAZMAT Team established a dry decontamination corridor and donned Personal Protective Equipment for their preliminary survey as a standard precaution. Once monitoring was completed, fire personnel monitored/surveyed for contamination and were allowed to leave the area.

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Objective 11: Traffic and Access Control

Demonstrate the organizational ability and resources to implement site security and to control evacuation traffic flow and access to evacuated and sheltered areas.

Extent of Play:

This objective will be demonstrated by the effective implementation of accident site security measures by appropriate resources and effective traffic control to divert unnecessary traffic away from the area of the incident/accident. Although security units should be sent to the proper locations for traffic control, no actual roadblocks/detours, etc. shall be established that would affect the general public, unless it is necessary for participant safety.

Objective 11: Traffic and Access Control – Met



Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Dispatchers need to follow a detailed questioning technique to insure safe entry of emergency personnel to a limited access scene such as used in this scenario.

Because the exercise involved so many different response agencies Law enforcement agencies were challenged in determining who was a responder and observer. Not all response agencies have identification (badge system). A more detailed briefing from the Incident Commander would

have eliminated the few observers that were able to actually enter the general accident scene.

Noteworthy Practices:

Traffic on US Highway 78, while slowed to the posted speed limit of 35 miles an hour, was at no time stopped or backed up because of the exercise. This was an important goal, as US 78 is a main freight thoroughfare. State and county law enforcement agencies worked together to maintain both good traffic safety and flow, and good safety for the public and scene participants as well.

South Carolina Department of Transportation provided addition scene safety by placing flashing signs at points on either side of the scene location informing the public of the on-going drill and warning them to proceed with caution.

Objective 14: Emergency Medical Services

Demonstrate the adequacy of personnel, procedures, equipment, and vehicles for transporting contaminated and/or injured individuals and the adequacy of medical personnel and facilities to support the operation.

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Extent of Play:

This objective should be demonstrated by the effective determination of EMS resources required for the accident site, communication of potential contamination hazard that may require pre-notification of EMS and other medical support personnel, and the steps taken by EMS personnel to plan and prepare for the potential contamination hazards.

Objective 14: Emergency Medical Services –Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

Emergency Services personnel were observed rendering patient care without the use of appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety glasses, face shields or masks and gloves. Some patients were not fully strapped to the extrication devices (backboards, scoops, etc.)



Noteworthy Practices:

Medical personnel moved quickly to extricate, evaluate and transport patients from the scene. The total time required to transport all patients was Forty-three minutes. In that time twelve patients were treated at the scene, evaluated and transported to Barnwell Hospital.

The Aiken and Barnwell Counties Coroners were both called and responded to the scene. Mutual cooperation and communication between Coroners and rescue responders was excellent. All agencies worked to develop a recovery plan for the six fatalities. The recovery plan was developed and executed in a very timely manner and the deceased victims were transported to appropriate locations by both Coroner agencies.



Objective 15: Containment and Cleanup

Demonstrate the ability to implement appropriate measures for containment, recovery, and cleanup of a release of a hazardous material.

Extent of Play:

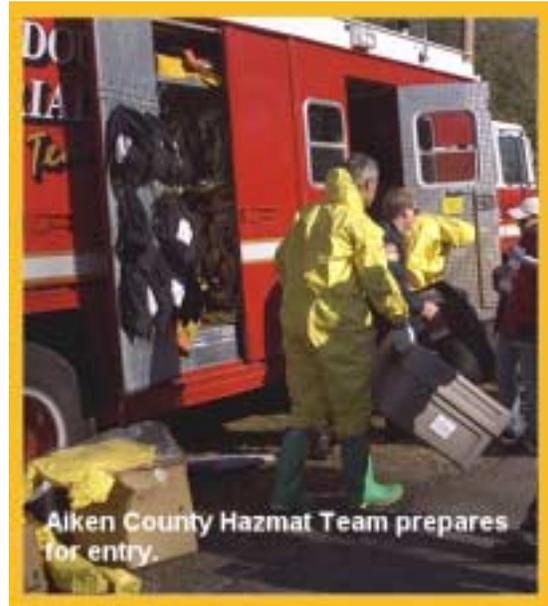
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Although the Spent Nuclear Fuel Truck is simulated to have wrecked, there is no simulated release of radioactive material from the fuel cask. This objective should be demonstrated by notifying and obtaining resources for assistance. Personnel (response and additional resources) should assess the impact of a possible release, demonstrate appropriate planning strategies for control and containment, and then control and contain the area around the boxes, if adequate resources are available.

Objective 15: Containment and Cleanup – Met

Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

The Aiken County HAZMAT Team vehicle did not receive complete instruction/guidance and entered the accident scene from Highway 78. According to Incident Commander direction and safety briefings this was from the wrong direction, also this entry route presented the possibility of driving through an area of potential contamination.



The HAZMAT Team vehicle was parked/located on the opposite side of the road from the Incident Command Post vehicle, causing a possible traffic hazard from emergency vehicles entering and exiting the scene. The vehicle should have been parked on the same side of the road as the Incident Command Post eliminating the traffic congestion near the Command Post.

Initial scene monitoring, to establish a hot zone line was not carried out by the decontamination team before personnel had entered the zone of potential contamination.

The HAZMAT Team initial survey did not include the acquisition of the shipping papers. It was assumed that since the Incident Commander already had the shipping paper information the shipping paper had already been obtained. The papers were later recovered from personnel conducting decontamination, bagged, surveyed and sent to the Command Post.



Noteworthy Practices:

Assessments of the scene and preliminary safety considerations were in keeping with team policy.

The possibilities of secondary hazards were discussed and as the entry team performed they look for additional hazards.

Survey techniques were thorough and carefully performed.

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Decisions as to the absolute safety of the scene from hazards of radiation were reserved until the Department of Energy specialists arrive to confirm the Aiken County HAZMAT Team findings.

Hazmat Team actions were conducted in a safe and appropriate manner.

IC Command was kept in full communications with all Hazmat Team actions.

Objective 16. Incident Documentation and Investigation
Demonstrate the ability to document a hazardous materials incident/accident and response.

Extent of Play:

This objective should be demonstrated by implementing appropriate log keeping, follow-up documentation, and debriefing procedures.

Objective 16. Incident Documentation and Investigation – Met



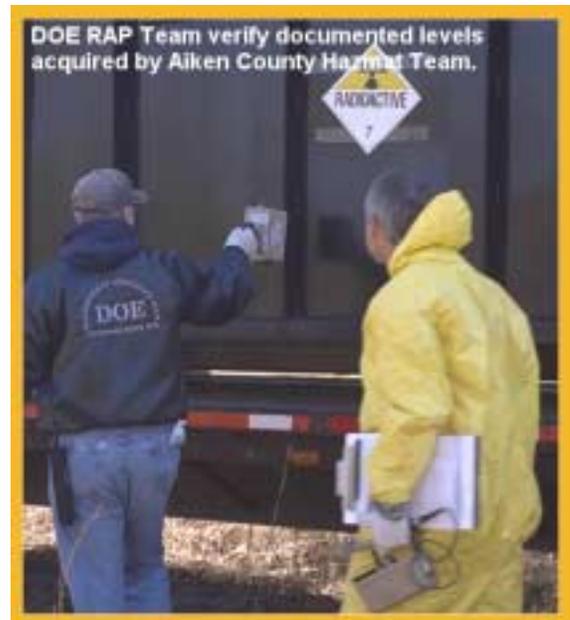
Noted Weaknesses/Improvement Items:

None Noted.

Noteworthy Practices:

Both the Aiken County Hazmat Team Commander and the Overall Incident Commander had recorders who noted the events by time and maintained records of all Incident Command actions and findings. It should be noted that the record keeping by both Aiken and Barnwell County E-911 personnel was accurate and timely.

Information gathered by the Aiken County HAZMAT Team was presented to the Department of Energy RAP Team upon their arrival and verified by RAP team personnel prior to declaring the scene safe from potential contamination.



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SEQUENCE OF EVENTS TIMELINE

Time	Unit #	Remarks / Action
0826		- Aiken and Barnwell Dispatch centers called simultaneously with request for aid
0827		- Windsor Fire Department dispatched and enroute to scene.
0827		- Williston Rescue/Fire dispatched and enroute to scene.
0827	14	- Arrived on scene – Establishes IC at Windsor FD station #2
0830	E14	- Windsor FD engine on scene
0832		- Williston Rescue on scene - Windsor FF reports to IC that fire is under control & that shipping papers are in hand
0834	703	- Williston FD engine on scene
0834	706	- Williston FD command unit on scene
0836		- Additional Williston FF's arriving on scene - Medical first responders directed to staging area behind CP
0839	14	- Utilizing Williston command vehicle communications equipment - Directs first responders to report to triage officer
0841	14	- Advises Windsor that accountability for Windsor FF's has not been established.
0845	HM1	- Aiken County HAZMAT unit arrived on scene and proceeded through intersection of Hwy 78 / Hull Road
0848	14	- IC briefs chief of Aiken County HAZMAT team. Advises that DOE's 24-hour warning point, RAP team and the shipper have been contacted.
0851		- Additional EMS units reporting to staging
0855	731	- IC requests that Aiken County Dispatch place District 12 & District 15 on standby
0856	14	- IC requests that dispatch notify Barnwell County hospital on possibility of multiple incoming victims
0858		- Aiken EMS reports to CP
0859		- EMS reports to IC that they have encountered 2 DOA's and will need Coroners. - Aiken County HAZMAT vehicle pulls up parallel to CP on opposite side of road
0900		- Aiken County Sheriff's deputy reports to IC
0903		- Additional EMS units arriving and proceeding through intersection of Hwy 78 /Hull Road
0905		- DOE's RAP team contacts CP via cell phone and advises that team is leaving Savannah River Site enroute to scene - Aiken Co. EMS REHAB unit arrives on scene
0908		- Aiken Co. HAZMAT team members proceed to the accident scene to establish a Decon line.
0912		- IC advises dispatch to notify Barnwell Co. coroner
0916		- IC and Aiken Co. EMS supervisor discuss proper entry route for additional EMS vehicles - IC advises that "back route" directions were given to Aiken County dispatch & confirmed route again
0918		- EMS unit leaving CP & reporting to triage at incident scene
0921		- DOE's RAP team arrived on scene
0922		- IC briefs RAP team & requests that Aiken County HAZMAT team chief and RAP team chief discuss possible options
0925		- Barnwell County coroner arrives at CP
0929		- IC discusses number of DOA's with staff and confirms that six were deceased
0933		- IC requests accountability badges for RAP team members that are entering scene
0936		- IC advises Aiken Co. deputy coroners to consolidate personnel in one vehicle before entering scene and requests driver's licenses to utilize as accountability tags.
0955		- Aiken County HAZMAT Team completes initial entry and survey for contamination release

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Time	Unit #	Remarks / Action
1000		- Aiken County HAZMAT Team reports fire contained to cab of tractor, (type B container not damaged) No detectable contamination.
1015		- Aiken and Barnwell County Coroners discuss scene cause and investigate with State and Local Law Enforcement officials.
1018		- Aiken County HAZMAT Team and Doe's RAP Team conduct second survey and confirm no release of contamination.
1027		- Fire Team exiting the hot zone. RAP Team conducts survey of Decon line.
1029		- Williston Rescue and Aiken /Barnwell rescue groups conducting recovery operations of DOA's. School bus being lifted to remove three trapped fatalities.
1040		- Entry Team members entering Rehab.
1056		- Williston Rescue and County Coroners complete four-corner bus lift.
1100		- Williston Rescue reports to IC that three fatalities have been located and removed.
1105		- Coroners report to IC that six fatalities have been recovered and transported.

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Exercise Controller Organization

Name	Position
Richard T. Powell, Aiken Co. ES	ABTEPP Coordinator
Kenneth E. Keaton, WSRC	Lead Controller
Jay Parker, Aiken Co. ES	Lead Incident Scene Controller
David L. Ruth, Aiken Co. ES	Exercise Logistics Coordinator
Lynn Clarke, Aiken Co. ES	Media/Public Interface PIO Representative
Bob Duggleby/Ernie Edwards, SCEPD	SC Emergency Preparedness Division
Gurney Wiggins, SRSFD	Incident Scene-Safety
John Angil – Barnwell Co. EMA	Motorist Role-player
On-duty Emergency Duty Officer	DOE Facility Operations Center
Keith Toole – Barnwell Co. EMA	Incident Scene – State Law Enforcement
Jarrell Gibson - SRSFD	Aiken County HAZMAT Team
Bill Cole – Aiken Co. SO	Aiken County 911 Dispatch Center
Liana Maule – Barnwell Co. SO	Barnwell County 911 Dispatch Center
Phil Clarke, Aiken Co. ES Mark Key, NEFD	Incident Scene EMS Commanders
Bryan Kersh, EFD Robert Steadman, WSRC	Incident Scene Commander
Wanda Kersh, EFD	Incident Scene Responding Units
Curt Newsome, SRSFD	Incident Scene Responding Units
George Weaver, WSRC	DOE RAP Team
Trish Keel, Barnwell Hospital	Barnwell Hospital

Exercise Briefings Conducted

Aiken County LEPC	7/10/00
Aiken County Fire Fighters Association	8/17/00
Aiken County Fire Chief’s Association	8/10/00
Barnwell County Fire Chiefs	9/12/00
SRS Quarterly Issues meeting	1/18/01
Aiken County HAZMAT Team	11/16/00

Tabletop Exercises

Williston Fire Department	3/6/01
Windsor Fire Department	2/21/01
Aiken County HAZMAT Team	3/7/01

Media Coverage

Augusta Television Station WRDW Channel 12 reported on the exercise, running the full story on Saturday, March 10, 2001 at 11:00 P.M. and at 6:00 A. M. on Monday, March 12, 2001. A shortened version ran all weekend as the local trailer to CNN's Headline News Network on both Augusta and Aiken Cable systems. The total running time for the clip was 1 minute 45 seconds.

Augusta Chronicle Newspaper (article attached)
Aiken Standard Newspaper

Mock disaster tests agencies

Web posted Sunday, March 11, 2001 – Augusta Chronicle
Have a thought? Go to the [@ugusta Forums](#).

By **Margaret N. O'Shea**
South Carolina Bureau

WINDSOR - Windsor fire-fight-ers rushed to the scene of an acci-dent near the county line between Aiken and Barnwell on Saturday after a frantic call from a passer-by who saw a bus flip over on the side of Hull Road and a truck loaded with radioactive waste burst into flames in a ditch off U.S. Highway 78.

Fortunately, the accident wasn't real.

Firefighters were at the scene five minutes after the call, finding seven students dead and nine others injured. Sixteen-year-old Paige Jamison's screams pierced the air. The Williston drama student gave a convincing performance that she had lost an arm in the crash that killed several of her friends.

For four tense hours, 19 emergency crews from both counties worked as if it all were real, just as they will have to do if anything like Saturday's mock disaster ever really happens.



As firefighters from Aiken and Barnwell counties try to enter a school bus, Ann Bass, of the Windsor Fire Department, records the injuries of Sheneke Williams, 15. The fake accident was part of an emergency preparedness exercise.

RON COCKERILLE/STAFF

So there really was an overturned bus, put at the intersection a day earlier along with flashing signs telling motorists to slow down for an exercise. And there really was a truck that really was on fire.

**Aiken/Barnwell County Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program Exercise
Report ABTEPP 2001 Multiple Vehicle Accident Involving Radioactive Materials on
Aiken and Barnwell Counties Line 03/10/01**

Paige was rigged with a container of fake blood to spurt, and the lower part of her arm was wrapped by emergency medical technicians to look like a stump. She was classified as "load and go," a severely injured victim in need of treatment fast. An ambulance took her to the Barnwell hospital, because this was its turn for a mandatory evaluation of how well it can handle serious emergencies with multiple deaths and injuries, said Lynne C. Clarke, public information officer for the Aiken County Department of Emergency Services.

In this disaster drill, the containers of spent nuclear fuel did not burst. If they had, a different set of procedures would have gone into play to protect the neighborhood, Ms. Clarke said.

As it was, people who live by the intersection were not evacuated, and a hazardous waste team determined there was no contamination.

Although they knew their lives were not really at stake, the drama students said the experience was nerve-racking.

Jessica Fields, 17, of Williston, didn't hesitate when someone asked what she had learned in the hour or more she was "dead" inside the overturned bus while workers sawed an opening in its yellow hide.

"I learned they leave dead people alone," she said.

The injured, who had practiced symptoms for all sorts of trauma, including fractures and hypothermia, were cared for quickly, she said: "But I got stepped on and moved all around, and people were pulled out over the top of me."



Barnwell County Coroner Lloyd Ward and Aiken County Coroner Sue Townsend took part in the transportation emergency preparedness exercise.<

RON COCKERILLE/STAFF

It was hard, she said, to stay still so long, and when the saw began cutting metal to open a rescue hole, she had to open one eye.

That noise and shaking sensation was "scary," said Michael Amaker, of Williston.

The 16-year-old was supposed to be shaking anyway. His assigned symptoms were those of hypothermia, exposure to cold.

And it was sobering, the students said, to see their friends in body bags - a grim reminder of how fragile life is, after all, even for the young.

Dummies were used for the roles that could have caused real injuries to real people, Ms. Clarke said - such as getting crushed under a bus.

**Aiken/Barnwell County Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program Exercise
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Coroners from Aiken and Barnwell were there with deputies, and in a real disaster they would likely still be dealing with the news media and distraught families today.

But in a test, the aftermath of tragedy was absent.

The drill, training and preparedness strategies are part of a nationwide effort developed by the Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program of the U.S. Department of Energy to help local responders be ready for accidents that involve radioactive materials.

Because Savannah River Site is in Aiken and Barnwell counties, local emergency units hold four drills a year, some bigger than others, but all geared to thinking about the unthinkable.

The drills involve rescue squads, ambulance services, fire departments, medical personnel, law enforcement units, public works, coroners and school districts.

Participants evaluated their performance informally Saturday, pointing out glitches and ideas for doing a better job in a real emergency. A formal report on the exercise will come out later this month.

Reach [Margaret N. O'Shea](#) at (803) 279-6895.

Signature Page

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Date

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Director Emergency Management Agency
Barnwell Emergency Management Agency
Barnwell County, South Carolina

Date

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Aiken, South Carolina

Date

Robert W. Duggleby
Manager Technical Plans
South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Division
Columbia, South Carolina

Date

A signed copy of this report is on file with Aiken County Emergency Services and
Barnwell County Emergency Management.

Appendix A – ABTEPP Planning Committee

Kenneth E. Keaton, SRS TEPP Representative
Westinghouse Savannah River Company

David L. Ruth, EP Coordinator
Aiken County, South Carolina

Phil Clarke, EMS Coordinator
Aiken County, South Carolina

John F. Angil, II Director Emergency Management Agency
Barnwell County, South Carolina

Keith Toole, Assist Director of Emergency Management Agency
Barnwell County, South Carolina

Jay Parker, Assistant EP Coordinator
Aiken County, South Carolina

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Columbia, South Carolina

Report prepared by Jay Parker and Ken Keaton, May, 2001.

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