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LESSON LEARNED

School Evacuation Planning: Clarifying Responsibilities for Evacuation of Students from Multiple Districts Attending a Shared School Location

SUMMARY

School emergency planners should clarify responsibilities for the evacuation of students from multiple districts attending a shared school location. This can limit confusion and ensure that the districts evacuate students from a single school efficiently during an incident.

DESCRIPTION

On November 17, 2009, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region III sponsored the Limerick Generating Station (LGS) Full-Scale Exercise (FSE). This FSE involved 3 federal agencies, 19 state agencies, 184 county organizations, and 17 private sector organizations. The exercise scenario simulated a containment failure in the LGS reactor, which resulted in the dispersal of radioactive material. The main purpose of this FSE was to test the response capabilities of local agencies and organizations located in the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) surrounding the LGS. In addition, this FSE tested the ability of participating school districts to implement appropriate protective actions during a radiological release event.

The LGS is located in southeastern Pennsylvania on the Schuylkill River. The LGS is surrounded by both a 10-mile and a 50-mile EPZ.

At the time of this exercise, students from the Spring-Ford, Upper Perkiomen, and Pottsgrove school districts attended the Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center (WMCTC) in the Spring-Ford Area School District. The radiological emergency response plans of the Spring-Ford, Upper Perkiomen, and Pottsgrove school districts and WMCTC designated Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) as the evacuation location for all the Spring-Ford Area School District students. However, these plans did not detail which districts were responsible for evacuating students from WMCTC to MCCC following a radiological release event at the LGS. As a result, during this FSE, participants were unsure if Spring-Ford would evacuate all WMCTC students or if each district was responsible for evacuating its student population attending WMCTC.

For additional information on developing joint evacuation guidelines when students from multiple districts attend a single school location, please also refer to *Lessons Learned Information Sharing* Lesson Learned [School Emergency Planning: Evacuating Students from Multiple Districts Attending a Shared School Location](#).

The LGS after-action report (AAR) observes that the school districts and WMCTC's lack of clear guidelines detailing evacuation responsibilities could have resulted in confusion during

an actual event. In addition, this could have hindered the ability of the school districts to evacuate all WMCTC students effectively. The AAR recommends that WMCTC and the three school districts clarify evacuation responsibilities and update their radiological emergency response plans accordingly.

School emergency planners should clarify responsibilities for the evacuation of students from multiple districts attending a shared school location. This can limit confusion and ensure that the districts evacuate students from a single school efficiently during an incident.

CITATION

Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Limerick Generating Station After Action Report/Improvement Plan*. 09 Feb 2010.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=43306>

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