

ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT

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EJIF EMERGENCY RESPONSE SUPPORT PROGRAM

In the Fall of 1997, the Environmental Joint Insurance Fund (EJIF) established a 24 hour/day Environmental Emergency Response System for its member municipalities to provide guidance in addressing an environmental spill or release. Many municipalities may the steps required to be taken following this type of emergency confusing and intimidating. In addition, the municipality may also have to interact with both the local Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) Response Team and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The EJIF Emergency Response Support Program was designed to assist municipalities with these issues.



For the purposes of environmental emergency response, a release (or discharge) is defined under the NJDEP regulations on Dis-charge Notification, Response, and Reporting (N.J.A.C. 7:1E 5.1 - 5.11; the Spill Act). In short, these releases include:

- a) A release of a hazardous substance.
- b) The release is into waters (including groundwater) or onto lands in New Jersey, or the release is outside New Jersey but such release may damage lands, waters or natural resources in New Jersey.
- c) The release did not occur within the limits of a valid and effective federal or state permit.
- d) The release is not otherwise exempt from notification requirements by New Jersey law.

To make the support program easy to use, a poster was sent to each municipality listing the steps to follow in case of an environmental emergency, along with emergency telephone numbers and a brief set of instructions outlining the steps necessary to access the program.

These steps are as follows:

- 1) In the case of an environmental release, first call the local HAZMAT Response Team responsible for your area. They can usually be reached by using the 911 emergency dialing system. Be prepared to give the nature of the emergency, an accurate location and a telephone number where you can be reached.
- 2) If the nature of the release fits the description listed above, notify the NJDEP at (609) 292-7172.
- 3) Call PMK Group at the EJIF Environmental Emergency Hotline 1-800-289-6681.
- 4) If the call is during business hours, your call will be handled by a PMK receptionist, and directed to one of the environmental specialists involved in providing services to the EJIF.
- 5) If your call is after business hours, an answering machine will direct you to extension #250. You will be asked to leave a message including your name, municipality, nature and location of the emergency, and a telephone number where you can be reached.
- 6) Leaving a message on this system will trigger an automatic paging system that alerts PMK employees that an emergency message has been left. Within several minutes, you should receive a telephone call back from one of the environmental specialists, and they in turn can provide information, assistance and direction regarding the next steps that need to be taken. The PMK environmental specialist will also have information regarding spill clean-up and remediation contractors that have agreed to provide services to the EJIF on a 24 hour per day basis. If necessary, the PMK specialist will meet you at the site to provide further assistance and direction.

We hope that EJIF members find this service helpful. If you have any comments or questions, or if you need additional copies of the EJIF environmental emergency poster, please feel free to call Rich Erickson of PMK Group's Kenilworth office at 1-800-879-6681.