



## **A Guide to Incorporating a Natural Gas Pipeline Emergency Tabletop Drill into an Upcoming Training Meeting**

Although rare, pipeline incidents do occur and require immediate action to protect people, property and the environment. Training and practice are key methods for developing a capable incident response team. Pipeline incident tabletop drills are a quick and effective way to test strategic and tactical decision-making, communication and execution of response procedures. Tabletop drills supplement written, class-based and online training programs and can easily be included in a regular department training meeting. This meeting guide includes step-by-step instructions, a sample scenario and key questions to ask that will enable you to incorporate a short drill into an upcoming training meeting.

### 1. Step-by-Step Instruction for Training Managers or Meeting Leaders:

Listed below is a step-by-step guide to planning and leading a pipeline emergency tabletop drill:

**Step 1:** Determine the objective of the drill. Is the objective to identify and work through potential communication issues? Is it to remind responders of the proper incident response steps? The incident scenario you select, the roles you assign and the time allotted for the drill may differ depending on the overall objective of the exercise.

**Step 2:** Review your department's response protocols with responders before starting the tabletop exercise. Distribute or refer to existing protocol prior to the meeting or before starting the drill.

**Step 3:** Provide participants with a realistic scenario, complete with graphic visual aids when possible. Start the drill by reading the scenario aloud and asking for volunteers to play specific roles during the exercise. You may also consider inviting a pipeline company representative to role-play the pipeline operator contact.

If you are conducting the drill for a group of fire service personnel, you may want to refer to the Incident Command Structure and select command staff or general staff roles as outlined in your response protocol. The size and scope of the incident in the scenario and the size of your response team will impact the roles you select. Possible roles include: Dispatch contact (if applicable), Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Public Information Officer, Liaison Officer and Operations Sections Chief.

If you are conducting the drill for a group of law enforcement personnel, you will want to select roles as outlined in your response protocol.

Encourage team members to respond as completely as possible to each aspect of the scenario and invite others to ask questions or add comments.

A sample scenario is included in this document for your reference. (See Section 2 below for sample scenario.)

- Step 4:** Take detailed notes, and after completing the exercise, evaluate the team's response as a group. Invite discussion about differing approaches. Allow time for participants to communicate openly about their questions and concerns.
- Step 5:** Record lessons learned. Work with others to update procedures if needed. Apply and test changes during future tabletop drills and written training materials.

## 2. Sample Scenario to Use during Tabletop Drill

Below is a general scenario that can be used to conduct a short drill for fire, police and EMS teams that may respond to the incident. Items in italics can be changed to customize this scenario to your community.

**Sample scenario:** A utility contract crew installing a fiber optic cable near the intersection of *Red Creek Avenue* and *Oak Lane* in *Happyville* (population 80,000) hits a natural gas pipeline. Natural gas is escaping and is on fire. One contract crew employee is injured. A crew from *KMMB TV 13 Action News* and a crew from *KWOW TV 8* hear about the incident on scanners and are in route to the scene. Traffic in the area of *Red Creek Avenue* and *Oak Lane* is becoming congested and several on-lookers have gathered at the scene. The wind is coming from the west at 8-10 miles per hour, and it is overcast. *Sam Houston* elementary school is located approximately 500 feet from the intersection.

## 3. Sample Questions & Prompts for Meeting Leader

Listed below are general questions and prompts that the meeting leader can use to initiate discussion with specific team members and the larger group. These questions provide a general structure to guide discussion and assure that key components of the scenario and response protocol are addressed.

- **Identify the various responders and the specific resources they will provide to assist in mitigating the incident.**  
*Open this question to all participants.*
- **What might the Incident Command System organization for this incident look like?**  
*You can use this question to ask for volunteers to play these roles for subsequent questions.*
- **What is the overall strategy for this incident?**  
*Start by asking the designated Incident Commander or senior officer and then open the discussion to the broader group. Focus discussion on key response priorities: life safety, incident stabilization and property conservation, Consider factors such as weather, exposures, and time of day as you develop key objectives and the overall strategy.*
- **What are the incident tactical objectives?**  
*Now that you have established an overall strategy and objectives for the incident, discuss and develop specific tactics to mitigating the incident. Refer to your response protocol as appropriate. Consider the following tactical activities: exposure protection, isolate the area, conduct evacuations as needed, monitor the areas in consultation with the pipeline operator, etc.*

- **What safety concerns or considerations would you highlight to the Incident Commander?**  
*Consider starting with the various assigned roles and then opening up discussion to the group. Also, encourage participants to think of all applicable safety hazards to avoid the pitfalls of tunnel vision. For example, responders may be inclined to focus on the fire and not observe the risk of overhead power lines.*
- **Prepare a Public Information Officer Statement.**  
*Invite the entire group to do this, but consider having the designed Public Information Officer read his/her statement first.*  
  
*The statement should focus on the following:*
  1. *What has happened?*
  2. *What is being done about it?*
  3. *Is there any risk to the public?*
  4. *Is there a call to action for the public (avoid the area, evacuations, etc.)?*
- **Discuss lessons learned, and action items by inviting the group to discuss what they learned from the exercise.**  
*Consider starting with the various assigned roles and then opening up discussion to the group. Focus on whether your standard operating procedures adequately address response to this type of incident. Ask the group how they think you can enhance coordination with pipeline operators as it relates to emergency planning and response. Identify any specific training areas related to pipeline emergency response that were identified during the drill.*

#### 4. Additional Reference Materials & Resources

##### **PHMSA Reference Library**

<http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/pipelinelibrary.htm>

##### **PHMSA's Emergency Response Guidebook**

<http://phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/library/erg>

##### **Pipeline Emergencies Training Program**

Developed by the National Association of State Fire Marshals and PHMSA

<https://nasfm-training.org/>

##### **WISER (Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders):**

<http://wiser.nlm.nih.gov/>

##### **Hazards of Products Transported and Safety Recommendations:**

A list of specific products that may be transported by Kinder Morgan with links to the specific Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) information.

[http://www.kindermorgan.com/public\\_awareness/additionalinformation/erg/](http://www.kindermorgan.com/public_awareness/additionalinformation/erg/)

##### **Emergency Response Guidelines for Emergency Responders brochure**

Provided by Kinder Morgan

[http://www.kindermorgan.com/pages/public\\_awareness/AdditionalInformation/KMSafetyBrochures.aspx](http://www.kindermorgan.com/pages/public_awareness/AdditionalInformation/KMSafetyBrochures.aspx)

##### **Locate/contact a local Kinder Morgan representative or request a Safety Data Sheet:**

[http://www.kindermorgan.com/pages/public\\_awareness/AdditionalInformation/RequestAdditionalInformation.aspx](http://www.kindermorgan.com/pages/public_awareness/AdditionalInformation/RequestAdditionalInformation.aspx)

*(Reference Material links updated June 2015)*