



## Florida Environmental Response Team (ERT) Fact Sheet

### Participating Agencies

#### FL Department of Environmental Protection

FL Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
 FL Department of Financial Services  
 FL Department of Health  
 FL Department of Law Enforcement

FL Department of Transportation  
 FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission  
 Broward County Sheriff's Office  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- ❖ **What is the Florida Environmental Response Team (ERT)?** The ERT is a specialized team consisting of representatives from the Florida Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP), Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs), Financial Services – State Fire Marshal (SFM), Health (DOH), Law Enforcement (FDLE), Transportation (DOT), Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Broward County Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The team has level A entry, criminal investigative, and environmental forensics capability. Personnel are not assigned to the team full time, but perform other duties within their respective agencies and participate in the ERT as a collateral duty closely related to traditional agency missions.
- ❖ **What is the mission of the ERT?** The ERT was established to augment local and regional response capabilities for incidents suspected to involve criminal activity including potential terrorist events. The team is trained to respond to and investigate incidents involving industrial chemical or hazardous materials. The ERT can deploy to an area of operations to:
  - Assess** a suspected industrial chemical or hazardous material event in support of a local Incident Commander,
  - Advise** civilian responders regarding appropriate response actions, and
  - Investigate** potential criminal activities including terrorism events.
- ❖ **What capability does the ERT bring to Emergency Responders?** The ERT does not replace the critical role of first responders and the Incident Commander, but will augment local and regional resources with special capabilities. On-scene, the ERT provides *tactical support* to the Incident Commander and integrates into the Incident Command System (ICS) as a special team under the Operations Section.
- ❖ **The ERT provides rapid confirmatory analysis of chemical hazards.** The team has sampling and air monitoring equipment and is trained specifically for level "A" entries that involve criminal investigative activities. Advice on event mitigation, medical treatment, follow-on resources, and other response concerns are available for the Incident Commander. The team also has access to state laboratories for chemical analysis of unknown agents.
- ❖ **How does the ERT operate on scene?** Upon arrival at the scene of an incident, the ERT Leader receives support objectives from the Incident Commander or Operations Chief. Using specialized equipment and wearing protective gear, the ERT can verify the perimeter of the exclusion zone, and send entry teams into the contaminated area or "hot zone" to conduct reconnaissance, survey, detection, investigation, and sampling missions. Communications reach-back links to various expert state and federal agencies—such as the 44<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Teams and Federal On-Scene Coordinators from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Coast Guard.

❖ **What equipment does the ERT use?** The ERT maintains a wide range of low and high-tech devices allowing for hazard identification, air monitoring, and field analysis. Equipment includes, but is not limited to the following:

- **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (1-hr air supply)
- Level A Suit, totally encapsulated; Level B Suit, Level C Gear
- Field Decontamination Capability

- **Reconnaissance, Detection, Sampling Gear**

- Digital Still and video cameras
- Portable gas chromatographs and infrared spectrometers
- Photo-Ionization Detectors (PID) for combustible and volatile gases
- Sampling Kits for downrange collection of a wide range of liquids and solids
- Colorimetric Tubes – detection of volatile organic compounds
- Hazard Categorization Kits for field analysis of collected samples

- **Computer Modeling and Response Database Systems**

- Access to GIS data from the Florida Marine Spill Analysis System maintained by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's Wildlife Research Institute

- **Communications Capability**

- Cellular Telephones
- DEP Mobile Command unit has 15 kW power supply and a variety of communications equipment
- Various law enforcement radios

- **Laboratory Capability**

- The ERT maintains close cooperation with the DEP, DOH, and DACS laboratory systems and can rapidly obtain lab analysis of collected samples for the full suite of hazards.

❖ **What special skills does the ERT offer?** The ERT combines the skills of all participating state and federal agencies and can quickly link to others via an established network. Team members from DEP and the other partner agencies bring a wide range of career experience and expertise. Individuals are trained to the HazMat Technician response level or above and the team train collectively on WMD and hazardous materials scenarios. Regular coordination is conducted with state emergency management, fire academies, law enforcement, health departments and the regional Forensics Response Teams—all partners in planning for incident response.

❖ **How is the ERT notified and activated?** The ERT may be notified and activated via several routes. Incidents involving hazardous materials or industrial chemicals reported to the State Warning Point are briefed to Emergency Response personnel in DEP. These personnel are trained to conduct responses and support local operations. Incidents involving a criminal act are reported to environmental investigators within DEP. Briefings up the chain will enable a prompt decision on ERT activation.

Local responders may request ERT assistance by following established emergency mutual aid notification, through counties, to the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM). At first notification of a significant environmental incident, the team will assemble for rapid deployment. The team is on-call 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Because ERT members are located throughout the state and not in one single location, a team member can be on scene of an incident within 3 hours of notification. Primary mode of transportation is via state vehicle.

❖ **How can I find out more about the ERT?** ERT points of contact are as follows:

Captain Biagio 'Blase' Angiuli  
Bureau of Park Police  
DEP Division of Law Enforcement  
(904) 256-1531  
[biagio.angiuli@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:biagio.angiuli@dep.state.fl.us)

Emergency Response Manager Timyn Rice  
Bureau of Emergency Response  
DEP Division of Law Enforcement  
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