



HOW TO REPORT A SPILL ON THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER:

An Emergency Action Field Guide for Oil, Fuel, and Hazardous Materials Spill Notification Basics for All River Users



This document was prepared by the Upper Mississippi River Hazardous Spills Coordination Group. For additional copies, contact the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association at 651-224-2880 or visit www.umrba.org/hazspills.htm

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If you see a spill, it's important to report it immediately! Those responsible for a spill must know and comply with all local, state, and federal reporting requirements, which can vary by jurisdiction and product spilled. However, other people may encounter evidence of a spill on the river, such as oil sheen, and not know whether the spill has been reported. When in doubt, **anyone who encounters a spill should notify the appropriate government authorities.** This is easy to do and will help ensure a successful response.

ESSENTIAL 24-HOUR NOTIFICATION NUMBERS

Federal, state, and local authorities should all be notified of a spill. This can be done with just a few short calls. To alert federal authorities, call the National Response Center (NRC). It is also very important to directly notify the state where the spill appears to have originated, or that appears to be most affected, by calling that state's "duty officer." When in doubt, please call all potentially affected states. Local authorities should also be contacted via 911, particularly if there appears to be an immediate public health or safety risk.

INFORMATION TO REPORT

Be prepared to provide the following information, if known, when reporting a spill:

- ✓ Location (river mile and/or general area)
- ✓ Apparent spill source and party responsible for spill
- ✓ Product spilled and estimated volume of product
- ✓ Any other notifications made
- ✓ Any response efforts currently underway

You may not have all of this information available. Don't worry, **just report what you know. Do not endanger yourself or others trying to obtain more information.**

Federal	National Response Center	800-424-8802
State	Illinois	217-782-7860
	Iowa	515-725-8694
	Minnesota	800-422-0798
	Missouri	573-634-2436
	Wisconsin	800-943-0003
Local	All Jurisdictions	911

SAFETY FIRST: PROCEED ACCORDING TO YOUR LEVEL OF TRAINING!

Spills present a variety of potential hazards. Do not endanger yourself or others by engaging in activities beyond your training. As a member of the general public, your primary duty is simply to report the spill as described above.

Detailed Responder Procedures for the Upper Mississippi River (UMR)

SPECIAL UMR NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL FOR STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCY STAFF

State and federal response and resource agencies have established a special notification protocol for use on the UMR. If you do not work for one of these agencies, simply calling the 24-hour notification numbers listed on the front page in this document will be sufficient to trigger the protocol.

However, if you do work for a state or federal agency, you should conduct your notifications in accordance with the following protocol:

1. First-aware state notifies, by phone, other potentially affected states and appropriate federal response and natural resource agencies.
2. Once notified, each state is responsible for its own intrastate notifications.
3. If a federal agency is first-aware, it notifies the state where the spill occurred or the state being impacted. That state then proceeds as the first-aware state.

Additional numbers to implement the UMR notification protocol include:

Important: Be sure to leave message even if phone is not answered.		
Federal	U.S. Coast Guard Sector UMR	314-269-2332
	U.S. EPA, Region 5 (IL, MN, WI)	312-353-2318
	U.S. EPA, Region 7 (IA, MO)	913-281-0991
	U.S. Dept. of the Interior (IL, MN, WI)	215-266-5155
	U.S. Dept. of the Interior (IA, MO)	303-478-3373
	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Midwest Region	612-702-9581
State	Use the appropriate 24-hour Duty Officer phone number listed in table above.	

ABOUT THE UMR SPILL RESPONSE PLAN

The UMR Hazardous Spill Response Plan and Resource Manual is designed to coordinate state and federal agency response to spills on the interstate UMR. It establishes several UMR-specific protocols and policies, including the UMR notification protocol outlined in this guide. It also includes appendices listing response resources, sensitive human and natural resources, and potential spill sources. Information about the UMR Plan is available from the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association at 651-224-2880 or www.umrba.org/hazspills.htm.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN RESPONDING TO SPILLS ON THE UMR

Responders need to be aware of the following when responding to a spill on the UMR:

- ✓ It is a **complex physical system** including locks and dams, the main channel, side channels, and backwaters. As a result, flows and spill trajectories are variable and difficult to predict.
- ✓ **High-value natural resources** are present on the UMR, including tremendous seasonal concentrations of migratory species, threatened and endangered species, and diverse habitats ranging from river bottom to floodplain forests.
- ✓ The UMR is an **important source for drinking water**, industrial water use, and power plant cooling.
- ✓ **Commercial and recreational vessels** may need to be alerted for safety reasons; also, their operations may hinder response efforts.
- ✓ **Diverse potential pollution sources exist**, including vessels, pipelines, railroads, highway crossings, fixed facilities, and storm sewers and other outfalls.
- ✓ The **UMR is a multi-jurisdictional river**, and it serves as a border for counties, states, and federal agencies.

Resulting implications for responders include:

- ✓ The need to be aware of potentially dangerous river conditions.
- ✓ Follow the UMR notification protocol to ensure all potentially affected jurisdictions are notified.
- ✓ Consult state and federal natural resource managers throughout the response.
- ✓ Physical factors, public safety considerations, and natural resource concerns may limit response options – this applies to in situ burning and chemical countermeasures as well as mechanical removal.

HOW YOU CAN PREPARE IN ADVANCE

An actual emergency is no time to learn about spill response. Here are some things you can do in advance to maximize your effectiveness in responding to spills:

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with this emergency action guide, your own agency/company plan, and the UMR Spill Response Plan. Refresh your memory periodically. Encourage your co-workers to do the same.
- ✓ Make a list of additional local phone numbers for notification purposes — e.g., the non-911 numbers for local authorities, numbers for any nearby drinking water operators, etc. Keep those numbers with this guide.
- ✓ Customize/supplement this guide in other ways that will enhance its utility to you.
- ✓ Know the limits of your training and experience. Keep current with refresher training.

A SPECIAL NOTE FOR RECREATIONAL BOATERS

Boating on the Mississippi River presents special hazards. Following are some precautions all recreational boaters should adhere to:

- **There are restricted areas upstream and downstream of each dam. Stay out of these restricted areas to avoid getting caught in dangerous currents.**
- **Stay clear of barges and towboats. If you cannot see the front of the pilothouse, the pilot of the towboat cannot see you.**
- **To reduce risk of damage from submerged hazards, stay within the marked navigation channel. Wingdams are charted and should be avoided, but other submerged hazards outside of the channel are not usually shown on the charts.**
- **Learn proper locking procedures:**

<https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Lock-and-Dam-Information/>

Keep these six things in mind because they could save your life or the life of someone you care about:

- **Expect the unexpected**
- **Wear a life jacket**
- **Know your swimming abilities**
- **Alcohol and water are a deadly combination**
- **Understand “boater’s hypnosis”**
- **Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning while boating**



Learn more water safety tips by visiting www.PleaseWearIt.com and following “Please Wear It” on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. More information specific to the Upper Mississippi River can be found on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers websites under the RECREATION and NAVIGATION sections for each district:

St. Paul District: www.mvp.usace.army.mil

Rock Island District: www.mvr.usace.army.mil

St. Louis District: www.mvs.usace.army.mil