

An aerial photograph of a wide river valley, likely the Colorado River, with rugged mountains in the background under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on this image.

# **U.S.-Mexico Inland Joint Response Team Meeting**

**Expediting Cross Border Responses:  
Emergency Personnel and Equipment**

**February 15, 2006 • San Diego, California**

# Cross Border Responses: Emergency Personnel and Equipment

**Issue:** How to expedite EPA personnel, contractors, and equipment across borders for emergency responses and exercises

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar protocol from EPA, was proposed to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to expedite border crossing activities related to emergency responses

# Need for DHS/CBP Support

- Effective emergency response requires the efficient and timely transportation of personnel and equipment across international borders.
- Customs and border procedures and paperwork identified as a potential obstacle during exercises
  - May delay response times during actual emergency situations
  - May further endanger the environment, public health, property, or welfare.
- Cross-border activities important during the conduct of bi-national training exercises
  - Part of the critical need for prevention and preparedness activities
  - Improves homeland security efforts on both borders

# Border Crossing Challenges

- Joint Contingency Plan currently has no customs protocols
- Each Port of Entry uses different procedures
- Frequent shifting of personnel at Port Authorities
- General lack of knowledge on requirements
- CBP not currently notified when an international incident is reported
- Existing process too cumbersome to be effective

# Use of MOA to Facilitate Border Crossings

- Having one policy mechanism could expedite crossings
- Coordination necessary with Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, as well as Canadian and Mexican agencies
- Proposal for Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)/ protocol drafted
  - To be modeled on June 30, 2005 memo “Parole of Fire/Emergency Response Personnel”
  - Incorporate use of the revised ICS form 204a for personnel rosters
  - Customs Duties, 19 CFR 10.107, utilized for reporting all equipment and supplies within ten days of importation or admission of equipment if needed, in addition to the broad equipment categories, previously submitted.

# ICS Form 204a

Incident Name:	Operational Period (Date / Time) From:	To:	Assignment List Attachment ICS 204a R6
Branch:	Division / Group:		
Strike Team / Task Force / Resource Identifier:	Leader:	Assignment Location:	
Work Assignment Special Instructions (if any)			[Ops]
Special Equipment / Supplies Needed for Assignment (if any)			[Ops]
Special Environmental Considerations (if any)			[P.S.C.]
Special Site-Specific Safety Considerations (if any)			[S.O.]
Approved Site Safety Plan Located at:			
Other Attachments (as needed)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Map	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Weather Forecast	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	
Prepared by: (Resources Unit Leader)		Date / Time	
ASSIGNMENT LIST ATTACHMENT			ICS 204a R6

# Meetings with EPA and CBP

- EPA initiated consultations with CBP in 2005 and met again in January 2006
- Reviewed challenges associated with cross border emergency response
- Discussed the use of a MOA or similar protocol as a mechanism to facilitate crossings
- Created a list of action items to further progress

# Action Items

## Proposed Action Items:

- Identify broad categories of response equipment that could be used in a binational incident
- Identify likely personnel (EPA and contractors) that may respond to a cross border emergency by utilizing the revised ICS 204a form
- Identify and communicate any existing U.S. or Mexican procedures for border crossings
- EPA proposes to test the desired protocol after initial pilot exercises are conducted
- EPA and CBP can refine this protocol after the initial exercises are conducted
- EPA is working with other Federal, state and local partners to increase the capacity and preparedness of our Mexican emergency responders through grants and other leveraged resources
- CBP will be notified of border hazmat incidents by the EPA regional offices
- Identify next steps for Mexico's expedited cross-border procedures