

RAILROAD ACCIDENT PREVENTION AND IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT (RAPID)

RAPID Plan

Senate Bill 48 (Chapter 766, Statutes of 1991) by Senator Mike Thompson, among other provisions aimed at preventing rail accidents, created the Railroad Accident Prevention and Immediate Deployment (RAPID) Force, which was responsible for acting in cooperation and concert with existing local emergency response units to provide immediate onsite response capability in the event of large-scale releases of toxic materials resulting from surface transportation accidents.

The law also mandated that the California Environmental Protection Agency develop a statewide RAPID Plan in cooperation with the State Fire Marshal, affected businesses, and the various entities included in the RAPID Force. The RAPID Plan is a comprehensive set of policies and directions that every potentially affected state agency and business must follow if there is a railroad accident in order to minimize the potential damage to public health and safety, property, and environment that might result from accidents involving railroad activities in the State of California.

Funding

To help create, support, maintain, and implement the RAPID Plan, the Legislature created the Hazardous Spill Prevention Account into which each surface transporter of hazardous materials was to pay a fee so that the total amount to be appropriated equaled \$3 million. In addition to funding the development and implementation of the RAPID plan, statute allowed the money to be used in the form of grants to purchase specialized equipment and provide emergency response training to local agencies. The authorization for the fee sunset on December 31, 1995 and was not renewed.

Local Government Support (See attached map)

Understanding that local government response agencies are first on-scene at hazardous materials incidents, DTSC focused its grant funding on local agencies such as fire, sheriffs, and health departments that respond to transportation-related chemical incidents. RAPID funding established Level "A" Hazmat response teams in San Luis Obispo, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties. Level "A" means that the highest level of respiratory, skin, eye and mucous membrane protection is needed, such as self-contained breathing apparatus and fully encapsulating chemical protective suits in order to safeguard from the hazardous situation. Support was given to smaller counties and cities that could not afford to establish and support full Level "A" response teams in order to provide first-responder assistance during an accident. DTSC also collaborated with CalFire's Office of State Marshal (SFM) to establish six Regional Training Facilities to provide training such as Technician/ Specialist certification and Hazmat Railcar Safety training to thousands of local responders and DTSC staff between 1992 and 1996, thereby ensuring broad response capabilities for local agencies. Internally, DTSC used RAPID funding to purchase equipment, train staff, and enhance its response capabilities.

Interagency Agreements

In addition to the local equipment and training program, DTSC entered into several interagency agreements (IA) with other state entities, such as CalFire, to provide more than \$300,000 in equipment and information to manage resources at the state level and allow these agencies to respond to major Hazmat incidents in a timely and coordinated manner. For example, DTSC established an IA with the Department of Fish & Game to install communication towers in the Feather River Canyon to facilitate better communication in remote areas. Similarly, DTSC entered into an IA with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services' California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) to provide specialized training for local agency response personnel.