



OCTOBER 2025

MARTINEZ REFINING COMPANY FIRE **AFTER ACTION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN** (AAR/IP)

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District





Agenda

- After Action Report Overview
- Participating Partners
- After Action Report Findings
- Improvement Plan
- Questions

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of an industrial landscape. In the background, there are rolling hills. In the middle ground, several tall smokestacks are visible, with thick plumes of white smoke or steam rising from them and filling the sky. The foreground shows a flat area with some industrial structures and a body of water at the very bottom. The overall mood is somber and industrial.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT OVERVIEW



After-Action Report Overview

- This After-Action Report (AAR) reviews the response to and coordination of the MRC Fire that occurred on February 1, 2025.
- Review of incident documentation and pertinent information to develop a baseline of expected emergency response and support procedures.
- Individual interviews, an after-action debriefing with all stakeholders, and function-focused group meetings provided additional information regarding response actions and areas for improvement.
- The analysis is separated into three topic areas:
 - Planning and incident readiness
 - Operational coordination
 - Public information and warning

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of an industrial landscape. In the background, there are rolling hills. In the middle ground, several tall smokestacks are visible, with thick plumes of white smoke or steam rising from them and filling the upper half of the frame. The foreground shows a flat area with some industrial buildings and structures. The overall atmosphere is hazy and industrial.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



Thank you for your involvement

Contra Costa County

Community Warning System
 Contra Costa County Communications
 Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
 Contra Costa County Health Department
 Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services
 Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office

Local Agencies

Bay Area Air District
 City of Martinez
 City of Martinez Police Department

Private-Sector Partners

Martinez Refining Company
 Petrochemical Mutual Aid Organization Members

State Agencies

California Highway Patrol
 CalOSHA

Federal Partners

United States Coast Guard



A dark, blue-tinted photograph of an industrial landscape. In the background, there are rolling hills. In the middle ground, several tall smokestacks are visible, with thick plumes of white smoke or steam rising from them and filling the sky. The foreground shows a flat area with some industrial structures and a body of water at the very bottom. The overall mood is somber and industrial.

AFTER ACTION REPORT FINDINGS



Primary Strengths

- Pre-Existing Relationships, Interagency Coordination, and Available Resources
 - Pre-existing working relationships and interagency collaboration between public- and private-sector organizations allowed for effective coordination during the incident.
- Internal Coordination and Resource Tracking
 - Effective internal coordination and resource tracking were achieved through the use of available tools to assign tasks and monitor resources on site.
- Public Information Officers
 - Public Information Officers employed by the county and Contra Costa Fire Protection District have extensive training and are trusted by county leadership to handle an incident.



Primary Areas For Improvement

- Response Plan Development

- Emergency response agencies in the county do not have joint response plans with area refineries, which led to delayed coordination. Currently, Petrochemical Mutual Aid Organization (PMAO) have pre-established response plans that identify partner roles and responsibilities during an incident.

- Terminology/Integrated Processes and Unified Command Structure

- Variations in how agencies integrated terminology, defined roles, and implemented command structures led to operational inconsistencies. These differences created confusion within UC, particularly regarding the involvement of essential partners, such as public health agencies, and ultimately delayed effective decision-making.

- Public Information Lead

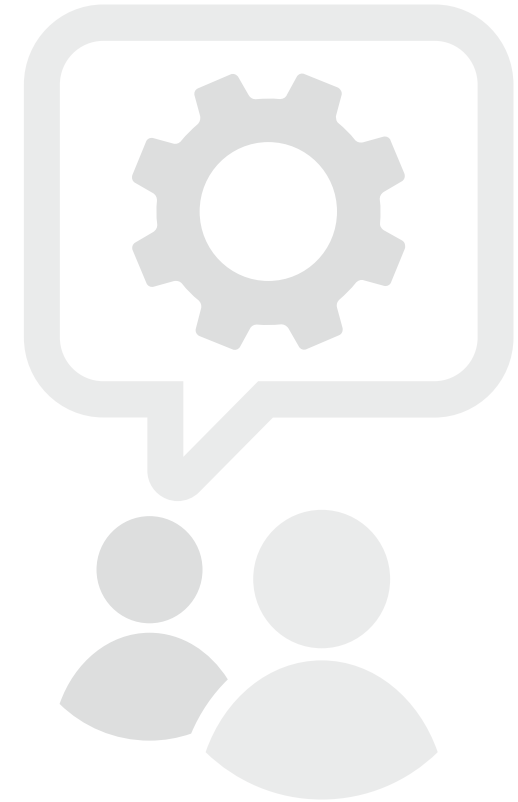
- During the response, press conferences and dissemination of public information were led by MRC Public Relations. Given the public's distrust of refinery operators in the region, messaging would be best received with a public-sector agency leading the messaging.





Capabilities Analyzed

- Planning/Incident Readiness
- Operational Coordination
- Public Information and Warning





Planning/Incident Response

- Strength
 - Pre-Existing Relationships, Interagency Collaboration, and Resource Availability
 - HazMat Resources and Capabilities
- Areas for Improvement
 - Response Plan Development
 - Communications Plans and Equipment
 - Interagency Training and Exercise
 - Mitigate Potential Loss of Petrochemical Mutual Aid (PMAO) Partners



Operational Coordination

- Strength
 - Internal Coordination and Resource Tracking
- Areas for Improvement
 - Multi-Agency Resource Tracking and Personnel Utilization
 - Implementation of Terminology, Integrated Processes, and Unified Command Structure
 - On-site Integration into the Command Staff
 - Identification of Hazardous Materials at Industrial Facilities



Public Information and Warning

- Strength
 - Public Information Officers
 - Public Education Outreach Initiatives
- Areas for Improvement
 - Alert and Warning Systems Education
 - Determining Appropriate CWS Level
 - Identification of Public Information Lead
 - Notify and Incorporate Jurisdictional PIOs

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of an industrial facility, likely a power plant or refinery, situated in a valley. Several tall smokestacks are visible, with thick plumes of white smoke or steam rising from them and filling the upper portion of the frame. The facility itself consists of various buildings, pipes, and structures spread across the middle ground. In the background, rolling hills or mountains are visible under a hazy sky. The overall mood is industrial and somewhat somber due to the color palette and the presence of smoke.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Improvement Plan

- Identifies the lead agency and who the main point of contact will be for each recommendation.
- Establishes Levels of Priority
 - High (within 12 months)
 - Medium (12-24 months)
 - Low (24+ months)





High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Response Plan Development

- Develop pre-incident response plans with refinery facilities in the county. These plans should identify when 911 dispatch should be notified of an incident, the facility's gate of entry, and the communication channels to be used. Roles of responding agencies should also be defined for fires, hazardous materials incidents, medical emergencies, and rescue operations. All planning should align with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1620 standards and Contra Costa County Ordinance Chapter 450-2 – HazMat Release Response Plans and Inventories.

- Communications Plans and Equipment

- Request that MRC Fire Brigade personnel and the refinery team leader carry EBRCS radios with them during their day-to-day operations.





High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Interagency Training and Exercise

- Prioritize establishing and participating in robust training and exercise programs that include both public- and private-sector partners, with a focus on integrated command functions, radio frequency utilization, standardized communication protocols, and coordinated resource management.
- Coordinate with MRC to establish a Contra Costa County Fire Protection District–MRC Joint Task Force, following the example of successful collaborations such as the City of Richmond–Chevron partnership. This task force will serve as a dedicated body for planning and executing joint exercises, developing shared response protocols, and facilitating continuous improvement in emergency management practices.





High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Mitigate Potential Loss of Petrochemical Mutual Aid (PMAO) Partners
 - Expand the scope and frequency of interagency exercises to enhance coordination and communication among all stakeholders. These exercises should also simulate scenarios reflecting the absence of PMAO partners, allowing agencies to test and refine response strategies.
- Multi-Agency Resource Tracking and Personnel Utilization
 - Expand the incident command structure, as appropriate to the incident, to allow for better span of control and improve incident management.





High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Implementation of Terminology, Integrated Processes, and Unified Command Structure
 - Establish a standardized framework that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the MRC EOC, UC, operations personnel, and other participating agencies (such as CCH) during an incident. This framework should be aligned with National Incident Management System (NIMS) principles to ensure consistency and interoperability.
 - Establish communication protocols to facilitate coordination between the EOC and IC/UC, enabling seamless information sharing and decision-making.
- On-Site Integration into the Command Staff
 - Develop public information plans that include clearly defined reporting requirements and expectations.
 - Update on-call status to include on-scene reporting and identify backup on-call measures.



High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Identification of Hazardous Materials at Industrial Facilities
 - Coordinate with refinery operators in advance, to develop a list of hazardous materials likely to be involved in a release scenario. This list should be based on the facility's inventory and provided to responding fire resources upon their arrival, in accordance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.
 - Coordinate with industry operators to identify an emergency response liaison to support emergency response in accordance with the NFPA 400, Hazardous Materials Code, Chapter 6.1.4.3. Emergency Response Liaison, to streamline the identification of hazardous materials involved in the incident and improve overall coordination between responding agencies.





High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Alert and Warning Systems Education
 - Develop a one-page information flyer detailing the various alert and warning systems available in Contra Costa County, along with clear instructions for how to sign up.
 - Distribute the flyer in partnership with individual agency outreach initiatives to ensure the widest possible cross-section of the public is informed.
- Determining Appropriate CWS Level
 - Provide training to area refineries on the CCH Hazardous Materials Programs Incident Notification Policy.
 - Conduct exercises with area refineries to evaluate their ability to issue the appropriate CWS alert level following a release.



High Priority Areas for Improvement

- Identification of Public Information Lead
 - Identify a qualified representative from the AHJ as the public information lead in all incidents, regardless of the incident location.
 - Train and exercise on public information response roles with MRC Community Relations.
- Notify and Incorporate Jurisdictional PIOs
 - Develop a joint SOP outlining how the lead agency assesses all potentially impacted jurisdictions, notifies those jurisdictions, and requests PIO support.
 - Provide local PIOs with training and exercise opportunities to enhance their capabilities and experience. Suggested training should include core Incident Command System courses, [National Disaster & Emergency Management University PIO Program](#), and Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative training offerings.



High - Medium Priority Areas for Improvement

- Multi-Agency Resource Tracking and Personnel Utilization
 - Organize joint exercises involving all relevant agencies to simulate integrated resource tracking scenarios. Ensure key personnel, such as ICs and appointed support personnel, are proficient in using these systems to optimize resource deployment.



Medium Priority Areas for Improvement

- Communications Plans and Equipment

- Implement a policy requiring the use of the PMAO communication plan for MRC and Contra Costa County Fire Protection District when responding to refinery incidents, allowing for direct communication channels between agencies.
- Request that MRC procure additional EBRCS radios to increase their inventory of EBRCS radios.
- Establish a quarterly schedule with refineries to perform radio communications tests with PMAO agencies using EBRCS radios on the designated talk group.

- Interagency Training and Exercise

- Engage in industry-led exercises and locally host Texas A&M Engineering Extension Services (TEEX) Oil Fire School training, if possible, funded by MRC. Regular participation shall include decision-makers, such as Battalion Chiefs, and debriefing sessions to ensure lessons learned are incorporated into planning and operational coordination.



Medium Priority Areas for Improvement

- Multi-Agency Resource Tracking and Personnel Utilization
 - Explore current capabilities within Tablet Command or staffing software to manually input external resources to maintain accountability of resources on scene at the UC location.
- Implementation of Terminology, Integrated Processes, and Unified Command Structure
 - Offer training opportunities for fire district personnel, county personnel, local law enforcement, and private-sector partners to enhance understanding of operational coordination, standardized terminology, and the establishment of a robust UC structure. These trainings should provide comprehensive guidance on the principles and practices of UC, with emphasis on integration between public- and private-sector partners. These trainings include:
 - [MGT-314](#): Enhanced All-Hazards Incident Management/Unified Command Course, offered by TEEX
 - ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents and G-191: Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface, offered by the [California Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#)



Medium Priority Areas for Improvement

- Implementation of Terminology, Integrated Processes, and Unified Command Structure
 - Offer training opportunities for fire district personnel, county personnel, local law enforcement, and private-sector partners to enhance understanding of operational coordination, standardized terminology, and the establishment of a robust UC structure. These trainings should provide comprehensive guidance on the principles and practices of UC, with emphasis on integration between public- and private-sector partners. These trainings include:
 - [MGT-314](#): Enhanced All-Hazards Incident Management/Unified Command Course, offered by TEEX
 - ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents and G-191: Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface, offered by the [California Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#)
 - Develop a robust training and exercise program to integrate a comprehensive UC framework into pre-incident planning and preparedness activities.



Medium Priority Areas for Improvement

- On-Site Integration into the Command Staff
 - Train PIOs on reporting requirements expected during emergency responses.
- Notify and Incorporate Jurisdictional PIOs
 - Incorporate all area public- and private-sector PIOs into training and exercises.



Medium/Low Priority Areas for Improvement

- Mitigate Potential Loss of Petrochemical Mutual Aid (PMAO) Partners
 - Strengthen relationships with PMAO partners by initiating strategic planning sessions dedicated to addressing the potential impact of refinery closures. These sessions should involve key stakeholders, including public-sector emergency responders, remaining industrial partners, and local government representatives, to develop a comprehensive response strategy.
 - Invest in training and equipment for public-sector responders to bolster their ability to handle industrial incidents independently.

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of an industrial landscape. In the background, there are rolling hills. In the middle ground, several tall smokestacks are visible, with thick plumes of white smoke or steam rising from them and spreading across the sky. The foreground shows a flat area with some industrial structures and a body of water at the very bottom. The overall mood is somber and industrial.

QUESTIONS





Contact

Aaron J. McAlister, Deputy Fire Chief

XCC Operational Area Mutual Aid Coordinator

Email: amcal@cccfpd.org

Phone: 925-941-3300 x1101

Mobile: 925-383-5003

THANK YOU

