

# Regional Rail Response Tabletop Exercise

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After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

August 2, 2023

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Exercise Name</b>    | Regional Rail Response - Shelburne   |
| <b>Exercise Dates</b>   | May 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2023  |
| <b>Scope</b>            | This was a 4-hour Tabletop Exercise at Shelburne Fire Department.  |
| <b>Focus Area(s)</b>    | Response   |
| <b>Capabilities</b>     | Operational Coordination; Planning; Mass Care  |
| <b>Objectives</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and evaluate current plans and procedures applicable to an incident on the railroad</li> <li>• Determine what the incident command structure would look like in response to railroad incident</li> <li>• Describe coordination between towns and organizations</li> <li>• Discuss what mass casualty means to each participating organization, and what impact a “mass casualty” incident would have on operations</li> <li>• Discuss evacuation and sheltering options in the region</li> </ul> |
| <b>Threat or Hazard</b> | Hazardous Material Release   |
| <b>Scenario</b>         | 2 train cars derail near the Shelburne Fire Department, resulting in evacuation.   |
| <b>Sponsor</b>          | Town of Shelburne  |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Exercise Name</b>               | Regional Rail Response - Shelburne  |
| <b>Participating Organizations</b> | American Red Cross<br>Burlington Fire Department<br>Charlotte Emergency Management<br>Charlotte Town Emergency Management<br>Charlotte Fire-Rescue<br>Champlain Valley School District<br>Essex Fire Department<br>Milton Emergency Management<br>Shelburne Community School<br>Shelburne Emergency Management<br>Shelburne Fire Department<br>Shelburne Museum<br>Shelburne Police Department<br>Shelburne Rescue<br>South Burlington Fire Department<br>University of Vermont Medical Center<br>Vermont Department of Health- Burlington District Office<br>Vermont Emergency Management<br>Vermont Rail System<br>Vermont State Hazmat Team<br>Williston Fire Department |
| <b>Point of Contact</b>            | <p><u>Exercise Director:</u><br/>                 Emily Harris<br/>                 Vermont Emergency Management<br/>                 emily.harris@vermont.gov</p> <p><u>Exercise Sponsor:</u><br/>                 Bob Lake<br/>                 Town of Shelburne<br/>                 bob.lake@shelburnepdvt.org</p>   |

## ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives and aligned capabilities, as well as the capabilities not planned for that were assessed during this exercise.

| Objective  | Capability                     |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Identify and evaluate current plans and procedures applicable to an incident on the railroad   | Planning                       |
| Determine what the incident command structure would look like in response to railroad incident   | Operational Coordination       |
| Describe coordination between towns and organizations  | Operational Coordination       |
| Discuss what mass casualty means to each participating organization, and what impact a “mass casualty” incident would have on operations | Operational Coordination       |
| Discuss evacuation and sheltering options in the region  | Mass Care Services             |
| No planned objective. Due to significant observations in this area, it was added for this After Action Report.                           | Public Information and Warning |

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

## Objective: Identify and evaluate current plans and procedures applicable to an incident on the railroad

The strengths and areas for improvement for each capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

### Capability: Planning

#### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

**Strength 1:** Shelburne Museum provided information on additional resources.

**Analysis:** The exercise scenario would have adversely impacted the Shelburne Museum and museum staff were able to discuss the vulnerability of the museum's extensive and very valuable cultural collections. Museum staff provided two resources that could assist any cultural institution or collection in planning for or responding to a disaster:

Statewide, the Vermont Arts & Culture Disaster & Resilience Network (VACDaRN) is in place to assist in both mitigation and response – from mold to hurricanes (802-622-4092).

Regionally, the Addison County Cultural Heritage Emergency Response Network (CHERN) is also in place to advise and assist organizations and institutions in Addison County (802-622-4092 and via [jwatson@middlebury.edu](mailto:jwatson@middlebury.edu)).

**Strength 2:** The Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) adequately contains the basic information necessary for response to a large-scale incident.

**Analysis:** While the exercise presented a very compressed scenario and timeline, the Incident Commander demonstrated that the necessary emergency response information in his Local Emergency Management Plan was available to him and Shelburne Dispatch.

Even though this incident response did not begin with the usual call-out, the Incident Commander directed requests for assistance in an expedient manner, utilizing the necessary information catalogued in the Local Emergency Management Plan – this included critical contact with Shelburne Dispatch and the State HAZMAT Team.

The State HAZMAT team and Shelburne Dispatch were informed immediately of the identification of the hazardous substance (propane), and the Incident Commander quickly began directing response efforts with help of the Emergency Response Guidebook's protocols for a propane spill.

As the incident developed, the resources that were called upon, primarily fire and ambulance response from nearby communities, were ones that were also correctly listed in the Local Emergency Management Plan.

Shelburne Volunteer Fire Department personnel would have, with the proper training, made the same use of the Local Emergency Management Plan's lists of resources.

The Shelburne Emergency Management Director noted that they were new to the position, and the role of the Emergency Operations Center in an incident like this wasn't yet clear.

## Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement 1:** Vermont Rail System provides valuable shipping information that may be under-appreciated and under-utilized.

**Analysis:** Representatives from Vermont Rail were excellent resources for the exercise, explaining their protocols and answering questions on the technicalities of a propane incident involvement.

In response to a question asking how knowledgeable Vermont Rail was regarding what hazardous materials were traveling their tracks, they noted a daily report that goes to the State HAZMAT Team and Vermont Emergency Management Watch Officer listing what is exactly “parked” with cars that have been shunted to, and left, on sidings throughout their rail system.

This report may not have been as well understood or utilized by the Vermont Emergency Management Watch Officers.

**Area for Improvement 2:** Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMPs) should include more than just the required basic, minimum information.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan

**Analysis:** The Local Emergency Management Plan provides resource and contact information which can be quickly and easily located as an incident occurs and as it unfolds. The Dispatch Agency Phone list in Shelburne’s Local Emergency Management Plan is, by nature of the town’s geographic proximity of multiple densely populated and trafficked communities, very comprehensive. The burden of these comprehensive listings, however, is the inevitable need to keep them updated. With prevalent changes in personnel it is especially critical to keep these lists current, and the dispatch phone list in the current Local Emergency Management Plan was updated 3 years ago.

Realistically, the Local Emergency Management Plan is the minimum that is required to be in compliance. During the exercise, both Shelburne and Burlington noted a need to update their Local Emergency Management Plan with annex information, including back-up plans, and additional alternate locations for Emergency Operations Centers and dispatch.

As the TTX demonstrated, a large-scale incident anywhere along the northern Route 7 corridor would affect in some way a large concentration of residents, including vulnerable populations in schools and nursing homes, as well as popular tourist attractions such as Shelburne Farms, Shelburne Museum, and Lake Champlain itself. Knowing how these various facilities are prepared for a major incident (such as their evacuation and/or shelter in place protocols) would be critical information for an Incident Command.

Towns may also benefit from additional annexes available on the Vermont Emergency Management website (<https://vem.vermont.gov/plans/lemp/localresources>) as well as annexes not discussed in the exercise that other communities may have already created.

All of this additional information should be included in annexes to the Local Emergency Management Plan, and well-indexed/labeled for retrieval by whomever has need for it in an emergency. Once annexes are created, they should be available and advertised to individuals that are expected to use them.

## Objective: Determine what the incident command structure would look like in response to railroad incident

The strengths for each capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

### Capability: Operational Coordination

#### Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

**Strength 1:** Participants were well-versed with Incident Command System structure and progression of an incident through phases of the Incident Command System process.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan

**Analysis:** Participants were able to articulate setting up an Incident Command Post, use of unified command, and establishing a staging area at the opening of the incident. As the exercise progressed, there was discussion about role of a Public Information Officer and when to expand the incident to activate the local Emergency Operations Center, involve Vermont Emergency Management, and who within the mutual aid system was able to supplement the Incident Command and general staff for an ongoing incident. Due to the nature of the event, discussion of alternate sites, splitting Incident Command Posts, or succession planning in case primary staff were injured also indicated familiarity with and importance of continuity, flexibility and operational nimbleness. There was also discussion on proper way to request logistical support and recognition of costs/reimbursement after the emergency. Some participants were not fully familiar with the Incident Command System acronyms or terms commonly used in responder vernacular, but the majority of players were, and even those who understood plain language could follow and contribute to discussion on how to manage an incident and what information needed to be communicated.

**Strength 2:** The Shelburne Fire Chief established Incident Command, correctly assessed the situation, and responded appropriately.

**Analysis:** Incident Command's assessment of the propane leak, and subsequent calls for assistance, along with evacuation actions, all followed the protocols outlined in the Emergency Response Guidebook. Calling for subject matter expertise via the state Hazmat Team and Vermont Rail also followed established protocols.

Establishing a Unified Command, initially with Shelburne Police, further reinforced the timely response for what appeared to be a rapidly escalating situation.



## Objective: Describe coordination between towns and organizations

The strengths and areas for improvement for each capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

### Capability: Operational Coordination

#### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

**Strength 1:** Participants had a clear picture of who within their organizations could staff various positions, and their strengths and gaps.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan

**Analysis:** Participants quickly established a Unified Command between Shelburne Fire and Shelburne Police.

Participants delineated operational branches for Evacuation, Suppression, Mitigation and Traffic Control, and discussed resources from Shelburne departments and mutual aid that could staff these. Participants discussed role of Liaisons, Public Information Officer, and bringing in successive levels of Subject Matter Experts include those from surrounding agencies, schools, nursing homes, and HAZMAT as the incident progressed and as duties became more specialized. Participants were aware of incident complexity, competing priorities and who was ultimately responsible for decisions. The result was a quickly established, workable structure where participants were comfortable with roles and had both knowledge of and trust in, the strengths and capabilities of people staffing those roles.

Overall, however, staff are stretched thin and Shelburne is dependent on responding agencies to fill many roles in a complex incident.

**Strength 2:** Decision-makers demonstrated deep knowledge of their plans and operational procedures, and communicated honestly about both their capabilities and gaps.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan

**Analysis:** This exercise included many knowledgeable decision-makers who were able to explain their plans, processes and procedures in detail. The rapport between agencies was apparent, and throughout the exercise participants regularly asked questions and elicited feedback from colleagues. Furthermore, agencies were unafraid to discuss gaps in planning and staffing, shortages of training and resources, and collectively decide on what steps should be taken. The candor and willingness to learn among the participants was just as critical as their understanding of the work being done in order to further their preparedness for real-world incidents.

**Strength 3:** Vermont Rail was hailed as an excellent response agency for their timeliness and knowledge during real-world incidents.

**Analysis:** During the hotwash, Vermont Rail was cited by Shelburne Dispatch as being an excellent informational resource that was quick to answer the phone, knowledgeable and responsive to assisting as a Subject Matter Expert in real-world incidents. They were called out as being a leader among rail industry to help responders navigate incidents involving the railways, and both their 800 number call line and engineering staff on the train were indicated as invaluable resources.

## Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement 1:** Shelburne needs to develop processes around activation and operationalization of its Emergency Operations Center for support of complex incidents.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan

**Analysis:** Throughout the exercise, questions regarding setup and tasking to the Emergency Operations Center arose. Based on exercise discussion and hotwash feedback, it was established that there were a number of concerns with the Shelburne Emergency Operations Center. First, there has been a change of leadership in Emergency Management Director and a need to familiarize the new person with both process and roles. Secondly, the primary Emergency Operations Center in this scenario would have been impacted by the incident, and identifying one or more backup locations with Memorandums of Understanding is critical. It was suggested that Shelburne explore alternate fixed sites, possible use of a mobile site, or look at remote work as options. Lastly, there was a discussion that many in the Incident Command System organization chart have multiple roles in operational roles as well as the Emergency Operations Center, and there is the need to have additional staff to support an incident like this.

**Area for Improvement 2:** More Hazmat training and education is needed.

**Analysis:** The participation of the state's Hazardous Materials Response Team was a critical component in the success of the exercise – the information passed along during the modules was invaluable.

However, as a result of the numerous questions asked, the need for the Hazmat Team to continue to reach out, pro-actively, in offering education and training to both first responders and emergency management directors, was a positive take-away.

As the exercise brought out, it is especially critical that first responders realize the limitation of hazmat resources in the first hour of an incident, both in response time and personnel.

## **Objective: Discuss what mass casualty means to each participating organization, and what impact a “mass casualty” incident would have on operations**

The strength and area for improvement for each capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

### **Capability: Operational Coordination**

#### **Strengths**

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strength:

**Strength 1:** Participants were able to identify triggers for identifying an incident as a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI)

**Analysis:** Each of the towns in attendance along with University of Vermont Medical Center were able to identify what their organizations triggers were for a Mass Casualty Incident. University of Vermont Medical Center identified a trigger of 6-10 patients, and Williston noted that they have protocols similar to the hospital but 3 patients would trigger a Mass Casualty Incident.

Essex identified they have an unwritten Mass Casualty Incident Plan with a trigger of 6-10 would be their trigger, but would need to call in transportation for support as they do not have the ability to transport. Since they do not transport the trigger number, a Mass Casualty Incident will be smaller as resources are not available to them.

The other towns of Shelburne, Burlington, Charlotte, Milton, knew their triggers would be 1-3, with transport being a similar issue. Towns were familiar with their Mass Casualty Incident triggers, but all had similar issues with resources and staff.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

The following area requires improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement 1:** Some towns lacked familiarity with the District 3 Mass Casualty Incident plan.

**Analysis:** Locating the exercise on the busy and dense Route 7 northern corridor, as well as exposing the vulnerabilities of bordering and adjacent communities to the transportation of toxic/flammable materials, demonstrated the continuing necessity for Mass Casualty Incident planning.

The complexities involved with responding to a Mass Casualty Incident, plus the continuing “thin line” of supporting first responders in the area, combines for very little leeway in successfully addressing the response needs for an Mass Casualty Incident.

A discussion about the Mass Casualty Incident plan for the University of Vermont Medical Center revealed this to be a good resource for towns with or without a plan of their own. Essex

noted the need to develop an Mass Casualty Incident plan beyond their current “unwritten” one.

Additionally, it was noted that many of the towns lack resources and staff to respond making a response sometimes difficult. Getting enough qualified staff for a response along with response vehicles presents a challenge for many of the towns in the region.

## Objective: Discuss evacuation and sheltering options in the region

The strength and area for improvement for each capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

### Capability: Mass Care

#### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strength:

**Strength 1:** Shelburne Community School has multiple locations to evacuate their students to.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP)

**Analysis:** The Shelburne Community School was prepared to talk about their evacuation plan and how they would implement it. The exercise scenario required the school to evacuate, but the school identified their buses are not on site during the school day so they did not have transportation that could quickly transport the students to another location. School personnel noted they could walk the students to the Shelburne Farm shelter in a short time period keeping them safe and inside. Clarity is needed on all evacuation locations in the Shelburne Community School's plan.

From there when it was safe to let parents into the area with their cars, they would take them to the reception center established by the American Red Cross. It was identified the Department of Public Works (DPW) would be able to support traffic control and getting everyone to their children and home safely.

#### Areas for Improvement

The following area requires improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement 1:** Additional shelter sites should be considered.

**Reference:** Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP)

**Analysis:** There are shelter sites listed in the Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan but it is possible there are additional sites that would be located outside of the area of impact that should be considered. If sites are selected, Memorandums of Understanding should be put into place for each of those sites.

## ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

### Public Information and Warning

**Area for Improvement 1:** Only three participating agencies had a formally trained and experienced Public Information Officer.

**Analysis:** Multiple agencies expressed need for someone to handle public information, and throughout the exercise indicated that there would be a need for someone to act as spokesperson, and to handle social media posts, rumor control, research incoming information, and notify the public of evacuation and shelter resources. All of these roles are best served with a trained Public Information Officer, but all agencies except Williston lacked a Public Information Officer, and most listed their spokesperson as their Incident Commander or Emergency Management Director, who'd likely be too busy during an incident to provide sufficient time to double in a Public Information Officer role. In addition, many of the cited spokespersons had no training. A number of agencies expressed interest in obtaining Public Information Officer training for staff, both agency and town, in this area.

## Appendix A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This Improvement Plan is developed specifically as a result of Regional Rail Response – Shelburne exercise conducted on May 31, 2023. After Action Meeting was held on August 1, 2023.

| Capability | Issue/Area for Improvement   | Corrective Action   | Capability Element | Primary Responsible Organization | Organization POC | Start Date | Completion Date |
|------------|--|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Planning   | Shelburne Museum provided information on additional resources.   | Contact information for VACDARN should be included in Burlington and Shelburne LEMPs.   | Planning           | RPC                              | Christine Forde  | 5/1/2024   |                 |
|            |  | The Regional Emergency Management Committee should reach out to VACDaRN for a presentation on the services they provide.  | Training           | RPC                              | Christine Forde  | 12/31/2023 |                 |
| Planning   | Vermont Rail System provides valuable shipping information that may be under-appreciated and under-utilized. | The daily report on Vermont Rail’s parked cargo should be brought to the attention of all Vermont Emergency Management Watch Officer staff and included in the training of future personnel in that position. | Training           | Vermont Emergency Management     | Harry Schoppmann | 5/31/2023  | 5/31/2023       |
| Planning   | Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMPs) should include more than just the                                   | Facilitate workshop to create a county-wide incident specific plan for rail response.   | Planning           | Vermont Emergency Management     | Harry Schoppmann | 12/31/2023 |                 |

| Capability               | Issue/Area for Improvement  | Corrective Action  | Capability Element | Primary Responsible Organization | Organization POC     | Start Date | Completion Date |
|--------------------------|---|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------|
|                          | required basic, minimum information.  | When the LEMP is updated annually, offer a training to key individuals that have a role in the plan about what the plan says.  | Training           | All towns                        | All city & town EMDs | 5/1/2024   |                 |
|                          |   | Key information from the Champlain Valley School District, Shelburne Farms, and Shelburne Museum emergency plans should be annexed in the Shelburne Local Emergency Management Plan. This may include helpful resources (shelters, generators) and evacuation plans. | Planning           | Shelburne                        | Jerry Ouimet         | 12/31/2023 |                 |
| Operational Coordination | The Shelburne Fire Chief established Incident Command, correctly assessed the situation, and responded appropriately. | Plan an exercise to include active shooter/hostile event planning for the county, to include the PSAP, and opening the Shelburne Emergency Operations Center.  | Exercising         | VEM                              | Harry Schoppmann     | 5/31/2024  |                 |
|                          |   | Mobilize and operate the Shelburne PSAP at an alternate location.  | Exercising         | Shelburne                        | Bob Lake             | 12/31/2023 |                 |
| Operational Coordination | Decision-makers demonstrated deep knowledge of their plans and operational  | Send email to voting members that haven't attended the REMC meeting to remind them of the value of the meeting.  | Organization       | RPC                              | Christine Forde      | 9/30/2023  |                 |



| Capability               | Issue/Area for Improvement   | Corrective Action   | Capability Element | Primary Responsible Organization | Organization POC  | Start Date               | Completion Date |
|--------------------------|--|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
|                          | procedures, and communicated honestly about both their capabilities and gaps.  | REMC should hold an Integrated Preparedness Plan workshop to document and schedule the plans, organization, equipment, training and exercises they need. This Integrated Preparedness Plan should include Mass Casualty Incident response, training for Public Information Officers, and holding trainings for Shelter Fundamentals and Shelter Management. | Planning           | RPC<br>VEM                       | Christine Forde (schedule workshop)<br>Harry Schoppmann (facilitate workshop)   | 2/1/2024                 |                 |
| Operational Coordination | Decision-makers demonstrated deep knowledge of their plans and operational procedures, and communicated honestly about both their capabilities and gaps. | Create survey on agency capabilities to assess interoperability channels. Send Survey to RPC.   | Planning           | Williston                        | Aaron Collette  | 8/2/2023                 |                 |
| Operational Coordination | Decision-makers demonstrated deep knowledge of their plans and operational procedures, and communicated honestly about both their capabilities and gaps. | Schedule workshop at REMC meeting to create countywide communications plan for using interoperable communications. Ensure Fire, Police, EMS and Dispatch in this meeting. When scheduling meeting, include survey about agency  | Planning           | RPC<br>Shelburne<br>VEM          | Christine Forde (plan and schedule workshop)<br>Bob Lake (assist with workshop planning)<br>Harry Schoppmann (assist with planning and facilitate workshop) | TBD -<br>September<br>23 |                 |

| Capability               | Issue/Area for Improvement   | Corrective Action   | Capability Element | Primary Responsible Organization | Organization POC                               | Start Date | Completion Date |
|--------------------------|--|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------|-----------------|
|                          |  | capabilities to access V-call/U-Call/Mobile capability.   |                    |                                  |  |            |                 |
| Operational Coordination | Vermont Rail was hailed as an excellent response agency for their timeliness and knowledge during real-world incidents.                            | Vermont Rail or other local rail resources should be included by all participants in their Local Emergency Management Plan contact information.   | Planning           | REMC                             | All city & town Emergency Management Directors | 5/1/2024   |                 |
| Operational Coordination | Shelburne needs to develop processes around activation and operationalization of its Emergency Operations Center for support of complex incidents. | Develop draft plan for regional Incident Management Team for presentation at future REMC meeting.   | Organization       | Essex & Williston                | Steve Trenholm & Prescott Nadeau               | 12/31/2023 |                 |
|                          |  | Explore alternate Emergency Operations Center locations and codify those in Memorandums of Understanding and Local Emergency Management Plan annexes. Be sure to consider locations that may be in nearby towns, such as South Burlington or Williston. | Planning           | Shelburne                        | Bob Lake & Jerry Ouimet                        | 10/1/2023  |                 |
|                          |  | Conduct workshops and drills to practice mobilizing an EOC in various locations and conditions for role and facility familiarization.   | Exercising         | Shelburne                        | Bob Lake & Jerry Ouimet                        | 5/1/2024   |                 |

| Capability                     | Issue/Area for Improvement   | Corrective Action   | Capability Element | Primary Responsible Organization | Organization POC                               | Start Date | Completion Date |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------|-----------------|
| Operational Coordination       | More Hazmat training and education is needed.  | The Regional Emergency Management Committee should follow up with, and promote the programs of, the State HAZMAT Team.  | Training           | RPC                              | Christine Forde                                | 4/2/2024   |                 |
|                                |  | Advertise HAZMAT offerings through VEM Newsletter   | Training           | VEM                              | Emily Harris                                   | 9/1/2023   |                 |
| Operational Coordination       | Some towns lacked familiarity with the District 3 Mass Casualty Incident plan.                       | When D3 MCI plan is updated, promote through the REMC   | Planning           | Williston                        | Prescott Nadeau                                | 8/1/2024   |                 |
| Mass Care                      | Shelburne Community School has multiple locations to evacuate their students to.                     | Shelburne EMD will contact Shelburne Community School to review and update their current Evacuation and Shelter Plan, including phone lists, additional shelter locations, and additional transportation options. | Planning           | Shelburne                        | Jerry Ouimet                                   | 10/1/2024  |                 |
| Mass Care                      | Additional shelter sites should be considered.   | Red Cross staff will work with the Emergency Management Directors in the region and support identifying and obtaining MOUs for shelters.  | Planning           | American Red Cross               | Michaela Olin                                  | 12/31/2023 |                 |
| Public Information and Warning | Only three participating agencies had a formally trained and experienced Public Information Officer. | Each entity should designate a minimum of one primary and one alternate person to attend Public Information Officer training to add to bench depth.   | Training           | REMC                             | All city & town Emergency Management Directors | 2/1/2024   |                 |

## APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS – 5/31/23

| Name (First & Last) | Organization   |
|---------------------|--|
| Lyndsey Morin       | American Red Cross   |
| Michaela Olin       | American Red Cross   |
| Derek Libby         | Burlington Fire Department                                 |
| Karina Warshaw      | Charlotte Emergency Management                             |
| Christopher Davis   | Charlotte Town Emergency Management, Charlotte Fire-Rescue |
| Chris Giard         | CVSD   |
| Brian Wellnitz      | Essex Fire Department                                      |
| Stephen Trenholm    | Essex Fire Department                                      |
| Michaela Foody      | Milton   |
| Jocelyn Bouyea      | Shelburne Community School                                 |
| Jerry Ouimet        | Shelburne EMD / Shelburne Fire Department                  |
| Andrew Dickerson    | Shelburne Fire   |
| Devin Major         | Shelburne Fire / Shelburne Rescue                          |
| Dwight Mazur        | Shelburne Fire Department                                  |
| Josh Estey          | Shelburne Fire Department                                  |
| Nancie Ravenel      | Shelburne Museum   |
| Thomas Denenberg    | Shelburne Museum   |
| James Mack          | Shelburne Police Department                                |
| Michael Thomas      | Shelburne Police Department                                |
| Kyle Kapitanski     | Shelburne Police Department                                |
| Josh Flore          | Shelburne Police Department                                |
| Lee Krohn           | Shelburne Volunteer Fire Department                        |
| Alex Spencer        | South Burlington Fire Department                           |
| Kate Hammond        | University of Vermont Medical Center                       |
| Derek Cronin        | Vermont Department of Health- Burlington District Office   |
| Harry Schoppmann    | Vermont Emergency Management                               |
| Mark Bosma          | Vermont Emergency Management                               |
| Chase Nielsen       | Vermont Rail System  |
| Matt Young          | Vermont Rail System  |
| Patrick McLaughlin  | Vermont State Hazmat Team                                  |
| Aaron Collette      | Williston Fire Department                                  |
| Prescott Nadeau     | Williston Fire Department                                  |
| Cindy Hahn          | Evaluator  |
| Heather Rigney      | Evaluator  |
| Jim Tonkovich       | Evaluator  |
| Bob Lake            | Exercise Planning Team                                     |
| Christine Forde     | Exercise Planning Team                                     |
| Emily Harris        | Exercise Planning Team                                     |

## After Action Meeting participants – 8/1/23

| Name (First & Last) | Organization                              |
|---------------------|---|
| Derek Libby         | Burlington Fire Department                |
| Stephen Trenholm    | Essex Fire Department                     |
| Jerry Ouimet        | Shelburne EMD / Shelburne Fire Department |
| Josh Estey          | Shelburne Fire Department                 |
| Nancie Ravenel      | Shelburne Museum                          |
| Michael Thomas      | Shelburne Police Department               |
| Josh Flore          | Shelburne Police Department               |
| Kate Hammond        | University of Vermont Medical Center      |
| Aaron Collette      | Williston Fire Department                 |
| Prescott Nadeau     | Williston Fire Department                 |
| Bob Lake            | Exercise Planning Team                    |
| Christine Forde     | Exercise Planning Team                    |
| Emily Harris        | Exercise Planning Team                    |

## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

*Of the 32 exercise participants, 7 submitted evaluation forms. Evaluation forms requested that participants provide recommendations/actions steps as well as feedback on exercise design/conduct. Participants were not required to complete every section.*

**Please list the top 3 strengths from this exercise and a recommendation for how those strengths should be sustained.**

As often, just getting people together to meet each other to discuss matters, learn strengths and opportunities, and understand complexities. Recommend further follow up perhaps more localized next time around. Include Shelburne Farms, a key player for evacuation scenarios. Include VTrans as a key player as well in any major incident along the corridor.

Realistic. Good interagency relationships were built or strengthened. Made you think. We need to work and train more with our mutual aid partners.

Well-organized, expert facilitation, engaging networking

1. Applicability to entire community. 2. Clear Communication amongst agencies. 3. Understanding of needs. More trainings, including different community organizations (business associations?) would be helpful.

Early notification was sent out to give participants plenty of time to plan, Participation from all agencies affected so all available resources are in attendance, having the contact information from agencies for possible resources as well as the ability to get those resources.

1. The turnout was amazing and made this session valuable. The amount of knowledge in the room certainly helped with the outcome and brainstorming. 2. Because of the knowledge base in the room and the conversation, it caused me to think about other venues in the area and how I would deal with the various geographical challenges they each bring. 3. This was a collaborative exercise and no one person took over or tried to bully a single point of view. Again given the experience in the room and reality this type of accident could occur kept everyone focused on the exercise and not ego.

planning, group together, realistic scenario

**Please list the top 3 areas for improvement with a recommendation on how to improve.**

Be good to have Google Maps/Earth/other loaded in the background to be able to bounce back and forth between the prepared screens and the big picture reality.

Work with mutual aid partners. Develop more automatic mutual aid agreements. Develop common communication practices.

Need invitations as far in advance as possible because it is hard for me to be out of the office for large periods of time; Ground truth for the scenario may be needed as I read some

body language related to the technical aspects of what would happen to an LPG railcar; We almost need an acknowledgement of incident objectives of which responder safety needs to be first (as part of the exercise intro) because I think we got a little ahead of taking incident actions and making decisions and not using the ERG and really talking about the safety zone and how we were keeping responders safe.

1. Hold trainings at different times of day - mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekends. 2. On-site (railroad) training? 3. More detailed maps would be helpful for those who aren't as familiar with the area.

The biggest area to improve on would be keeping to the scenario and the time frame in which the events are happening. The discussion can sometimes get off track and get ahead of the actual event.

1. The timeline on the crash got away from us. Given the most important aspect of an incident is the first 10 – 20 minutes. Focusing on these critical minutes would have been good. 2. All of the conversation about what if and how to does not matter if within the first 10 minutes the train car catches fire. It is at this critical juncture, when the fire starts, that we work toward keeping the tank car from turning into a bleve. 3. We rely on a lot of Departments. A couple were not at the exercise. It would have been nice to have Hinesburg PD / FD as well as Ferrisburgh FD and perhaps VSP.

**Please list the equipment, training or plans/procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Please indicate the priority level for each (high, medium, low)**

Mutual aid agreements- high, Common operating frequencies- medium, More training with mutual aid partners- medium"

I would have liked to hear a little more at the beginning about the engagement between the VHMRT Crew Chief and the VEM Watch Officer to understand the notification process. People need to understand what communications are happening at that level, and what the IC may be able to ask for in terms of support. It sounds as though support for dispatch in the region remains very thin.

A review of what residences/schools, etc. should have on hand should they need to shelter in place for an extended period. A review of how local emergency management teams can be of benefit to first responder organizations before, during and after a major event.

A quick reference sheet should be made listing all the agencies with their contact info and numbers. This would assist the EMD in getting resources without putting the burden on an overtaxed dispatch center or the incident commander.

1. MOU's with Shelburne Community School / Shelburne Farms / Shelburne Museum / Arbors / Meach Cove Farm – High, 2. Update on Hazmat Awareness – Medium, 3. Due to the level of staffing meeting with the various Town Departments (Highway, Sewer, Water) to train on where we may need them to block roads and what equipment they have such as barricades, traffic barrels, cones, etc. – High, 4. Interoperability between FD / PD. Quarterly test of radios and communications between the agencies. VCALL and UCALL. - Medium

5. Backup Communications plan (dispatch) - Drill the evacuation and set up of an off-site center. To include finding out what it takes to transfer phones / if we have the capability to transfer phones / do we have a location off site? / How long will it take to get the departments to answer phones in there respective stations and how do we make that happen? - High, 6. Given the size of this event and how many people may have been killed or injured, Will the OCME respond to us to help in documentation of the dead? What other partners should we be looking to in the private sector to help us? How long before we contact the Feds (NTSB / FBI )? - Medium, 7. Should we think about multimeters for the cruisers? - Low, 8. Where would we set up evacuation points for civilians who have no where to go? - Medium / High, 9. VTALERT. - Medium

should work to develop state wide or county wide base annexes for this type of incident that local responders can add specific local assets to yet the common plan is similar

### **Additional Comments**

Thanks for putting this together - glad we instigated this at long last!

The exercise facilitation by Emily Harris was topnotch. It wasn't an easy exercise topic nor were the participants a characteristically easy group of people to manage in this type of engagement. She really made the exercise engaging and she balanced giving people an opportunity to speak with following conversation threads that needed to be chased to ground. Exceptional.

Thought this training was very beneficial. Thank you.



## Exercise Design

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.



**What changes would you make to improve the design of the exercise? Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.**

As noted, involve several other key parties. Promote a follow up for lessons learned and clarified incident action plans.

Ground truth is needed on a highly technical topic such as LPG rail car/fire response. You may want a small team to talk it through before you bring it before a group of firefighters with varying levels of knowledge/experience. It certainly inspired the requisite discussion, but in my own mind, I was questioning how it would have really played out. There was another good comment about "would there really only be only one LPG car" and "what other cargo/chemicals would we need to consider". I think you had a high level of experience in the room that really wanted to think about a scenario with more than just LPG.

There was a lot of expertise in the room - would be great to hear more from those who have knowledge and experience in the subject at hand.

As mentioned previously, staying on track and sticking to the time frame of the event and avoiding too much discussion or getting ahead of the scenario.

We were told in the beginning not to open the handout material until told to do so and not look ahead. We were never told to utilize the material whereas it would have been a nice place to take notes and follow along.

## Exercise Design Feedback from Hotwash

At the conclusion of the exercise, a hotwash was held with all attendees. Comments from that hotwash have been incorporated throughout this After Action Report, but comments about the exercise design are included here.

### Strengths:

- the favorable representation from the region's emergency response services, including key personnel who would have actually been involved had this been a real incident;
- the opportunity to again exercise in-person, face-to-face with colleagues and mutual aid responders;
- the scenario's location as an excellent choice (and highly plausible) for such an incident, given the busy and dense northern Rte. 7 corridor;
- Vermont Rail's confirmation that an incident involving a single propane tank car was realistic and highly possible;
- the excellent brainstorming as the incident unfolded and more and more questions arose (for instance, the use of DPW equipment to block/detour traffic);
- very well moderated

### Areas for Improvement

- Attendees who were not trained first responders (such as school personnel) had difficulty interpreting many of the emergency management acronyms that were mentioned during the exercise;
- Additional maps – whether in the Situational Manual or displayed separately during the exercise – would have enabled a clear situational awareness as the incident modules developed;
- In general, the timelines noted were too compressed (example: only 10 min. separated start of Module 1 and start of Module 2). This compression contributed, in part, to insufficient time and discussion being spent on the critical first 10-20 minutes of the incident;
- Representatives of the area's vulnerable populations, other than the schools, would have not only added to the realism of the exercise, but may have added plans and resources that were not previously known;
- While the possibility of a propane incident at this vulnerable location was plausible, it was pointed out that there would have had to have been some further external force to rupture the reinforced wall of a propane tanker car;