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Full-scale live-transfer training exercise helps prepare for crisis like Fort McMurray

By Patrick Knight, Operations Manager, Flammable Liquids



On May 19, Emergency Response Assistance Canada (ERAC), in conjunction with Canadian Pacific (CP), conducted a rail emergency exercise as part of ongoing ERAC responder training in the event of an incident involving a rail car carrying flammable liquids or gas. ERAC's ongoing training events are critical to preparing for crisis like the wild fires in Fort McMurray.

ERAC Response Teams, Technical Advisors and Remedial Measures Advisors from across Alberta participated in this full-scale hands-on training exercise involving three simultaneous controlled transfers of flammable product from rail cars. This event served not only as training for responders, but also exercised and tested ERAP plans. Stakeholder engagement, including Transport Canada officials, was excellent.

The event took place in the historic, CP Strathcona rail yard, in Edmonton, Alberta. The exercise included many collaborative organizations: ERAC, CP, Edmonton and Strathcona County Fire Departments, STARS Emergency Link Centre and ERAC Response Teams. The three Response Teams actively participated in the transfer exercise were: Keyera (LPG team), Iron Horse (Flammable Liquids team), and Shield (Flammable Liquids team). These three teams completed their annual regional assessments during the full-scale exercise. All teams were successful in demonstrating their competency as required in the ERAP.

Over 40 Plan Participants attended the training exercise as observers and local media was also invited on site to cover the event, resulting in [positive news coverage](#) raising awareness of emergency response preparedness and training.

Rail incidents involving flammable liquids and gases, although very rare, can happen at any time and any place. If they do, ERAC is capable of responding with highly-trained and experienced responders. Controlled transfer exercises provide our responders with critical experience to ensure they are ready to act when an incident occurs.

ERAC is planning an Eastern full-scale Live-Transfer Exercise in conjunction with CN, located in the Greater Toronto Area, on September 15, 2016. Stay tuned for more details.
