**Summary of Updates for the New 2020 Emergency Response Guidebook**

The new 2020 version of the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) is finally out, and hard copies are now available. The ERG is published every 4 years.

**What is the ERG?**

The ERG contains emergency response information and is a handbook used by emergency and hazardous materials incident responders, truck drivers, railroad personnel, pipeline personnel, pilots, police and firefighters. It is written and updated by four separate international agencies:

* U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
* Transport Canada’s Canadian Transportation Emergency Centre (CANUTEC)
* Argentina’s Chemistry Information Center for Emergencies (CIQUIME)
* Mexico’s Secretariat of Communications and Transport

iSi uses the ERG in our HAZWOPER training as well as our DOT Hazardous Materials Transportation, Hazardous Waste Management and RCRA Refresher classes. This is because handling emergency spills are a component of all of these classes.

**Planned Updates**

The four agencies have been working on this latest version since 2017. In 2018, all of the agencies solicited input from their public through calls for comment, listening sessions, online surveys, and articles. From these solicitations, 100 comments were gleaned to be considered for incorporation and DOT held a public meeting as well. Since then, sub-groups worked on the updates.

Here is a list of the planned changes and items that were up for review within each section of the book.

The agencies will:

**White Pages [General Information, Instructions, Recommendations, Guidance]**

* Review content for use of plain language;
* Improved quality of illustrations in charts for railcar and road trailer identification;
* Add new lithium battery markings;
* New terms in the glossary section;
* Add a decontamination section; and,
* Add basic information about heat induced tears (HIT).

**Orange Pages [Response Guides]**

* Comprehensively review of all materials and their assignments in the orange pages by FEMA/NFA, with certain items up for review in 2020 while others will be reviewed before the 2024 version;
* Distances in the Public Safety section are now in the Evacuation Section;
* Created a new “How to Use the Orange Guide Pages” section;
* Guide 121 Gases – inert was merged with Guide 120 Gases – inert (including refrigerated liquids);
* Added CAUTION sentences for specific materials;
* Clarify sentences;
* Address inhalation concerns for petroleum crude oil (UN1267) in Guide 128; and,
* Reevaluate radioactive materials guides with radiological/nuclear regulatory agencies.

**Yellow/Blue Pages [Materials in ID/Name of Material Order]**

* Add or remove UN numbers to align with United Nations Model regulations and North American regulations;
* Remove UN numbers for chemical warfare agents;
* Reevaluated guide assignments for some materials; and,
* Review polymerization hazards for certain materials.

**Green Pages [Isolation and Protective Action Distances]**

* Add distances for new Poison Inhalation Hazard/Toxic Inhalation Hazard materials added by regulations;
* Revise Table 2 introduction;
* Add container capacities to Table 3;
* Make a new border to differentiate between Tables 1, 2 and 3; and,
* Argonne National Laboratory will update the Chemical Accident Statistical Risk Assessment Model (CASRAM) with outcomes from field and lab experiments.

**Where Can the Current ERG Be Found?**

A free PDF version of the current Emergency Response Guidebook is available online on the [PHMSA website](https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/erg/emergency-response-guidebook-erg). There’s also a [mobile app](https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/erg/erg2016-mobileapp) for the guide available for both Android and iPhone devices. If you’d like to purchase a hard copy for your use, check out the [iSi online store](https://store.isienvironmental.com/collections/all).