

Environment & Energy

# Hazardous Substance Centers Must Plan for Poor Weather, EPA Says

By Zach Bright

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Facilities with substances deemed potentially unsafe by the Clean Water Act will now have to submit response plans to brace for “worst-case discharges” in extreme weather events.

The new requirements would outline a specific approach to dealing with the “largest foreseeable discharge in adverse weather conditions,” the Environmental Protection Agency said in a news release.

1. Since Hurricane Harvey slammed Texas in 2017, the EPA has worked with companies to ensure they reduce the risk of hazardous substances spilling or leaking during severe weather.
2. The rule would apply to industrial facilities that are at or exceed maximum on-site Clean Water Act substance capacities and are based within half a mile from navigable water or en route to navigable water. Plans must outline “hazard evaluation, personnel roles and responsibilities, response actions, and drills and exercises.”
3. “As climate change increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, planning and preparedness for these incidents are especially important,” Carlton Waterhouse, deputy assistant administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management, said in the statement.
4. The EPA is taking 60 days of public comment on the proposed rule.

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