

Auburn University and USDA/Natural
Resources Conservation Service

Alabama Aquaculture
Best Management Practice (BMP)

Emergency Response and Management

BMP No. 15



Definition

Emergency situations can arise on fish farms that require a swift response and proper management to avoid harming the environment or jeopardizing human safety. Planning for such eventualities will aid farm personnel in making timely, responsible decisions when an actual emergency occurs.

Explanation

Some emergencies that could possibly occur on a fish farm are: sudden, massive mortality; spills of fuel, feed, or chemicals; fire involving machinery or structures; serious injury to one or more workers from accidents involving machinery, electrical shock, heat stress, lightning strikes, chemical contact, insect stings, snake bites, and fish spines; need to resuscitate a drowning person; and dam failures. As indicated in BMP No. 14, workers should be given safety training, warning signs should be posted in potentially dangerous places, and technical information should be provided for products that can cause negative environmental impacts or harm humans. Also, farm infrastructure should be designed to prevent emergency situations as much as possible.

The purpose of this guide sheet is to provide suggestions on management of actual emergencies.

Emergency management

Practices

- *Procedures should be developed for managing spills of oil, fuel, chemicals, feeds, or other products. The equipment and supplies needed for managing and cleaning up these spills should be readily available and easily accessible. Workers should be trained to use the equipment. Spills should be reported promptly following USDA NRCS AL Guide Sheet No. AL 701 recommendations.*
- *Fire extinguishers should be located in appropriate places on the farm and in farm vehicles. The county fire department should be notified immediately for major fires.*
- *Workers should be trained in first aid of electrical shock, profuse bleeding, drowning, and other possible medical emergencies. Nevertheless, the emergency medical service should be summoned to deal with the medical emergency.*
- *Dam or embankment breaks should be reported to the county emergency management office. If public infrastructure such as roads are affected, the Sheriff's Department also should be notified.*
- *Workers should be provided a mobile telephone to allow prompt communications about emergencies. The appropriate*

telephone numbers for notification of emergency response agencies or teams should be posted at several locations and made available to all employees.

Implementation notes

The most important aspect of emergency management is prevention of emergencies through design and construction features, regular employee meetings to discuss and verify effective response procedures, and regular worker safety training. Once an emergency occurs, it is critical to know how to respond in a

rapid and efficient manner. Promotion of safety and planning for response to emergencies should be on-going processes.

References

Minchew, D.C. 1999. Safety for fish farm workers. USDA/Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, 16 pages.

USDA NRCS AL Guide Sheet No.
AL 701 – Proper fuel storage on the farm.



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