



Emergency Response Assistance Canada  
Assistance d'Intervention d'Urgence du Canada  
1100, 744 – 4th Ave S.W. Calgary, Alberta T2P 3T4  
Telephone: (587) 349-5880 Fax: (403) 543-6099 Web: [www.erac.org](http://www.erac.org)

---

## Joint Training

*-Louis-Philippe Ethier*

Often the fire department response finds a hazardous condition that meets its threshold level based on its protocol. The Fire Chief may then request an ERAC response team. Approach this scene as you would any hazardous material incident. In effect, you are arriving at a confirmed emergency. The dangerous good may still be leaking, and the situation may be getting worse.

Some fire department crews also often describe us (the ERAC emergency response team) as “The Lone Ranger” (not the cavalry) relative to the assistance given. When you arrive at an incident, you have a number of tasks to perform: make your own size-up, identify/evaluate the hazard, decide on a course of action, and determine if additional response team members are needed. Keep in mind that the response time of any additional help might be even longer than the initial response time.



Finally, firefighters may feel overwhelming relief when an ERAC response team arrives on scene and often think that since the “expert” is here, they will now mitigate the incident quickly and safely. If that’s their assumption, they are putting their complete trust and faith on the ERAC emergency response team. They are betting many lives on our members, your instruments, and so on. They are betting that you are competent and a complete expert in procedures, gas detection, sampling, data analysis, as well as communication with the fire department ICS and emergency response.

Joint training between ERAC response team members and firefighters is critical to success on the scene. Leaders and members of both groups must train together as a team.

Joint training will build mutual confidence, cooperation, respect and full recognition of each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Joint, scenario-based training is a force multiplier that maximizes the effects of limited resources on both sides.