

# Safety guidelines and good practices for the management and retention of firefighting water



**UNECE**

## **Why are these safety guidelines needed?**

Firefighting responses to industrial accidents often produce a significant volume of contaminated water, which may cause considerable environmental damage if not properly contained and released into the soil and surrounding waters. The devastating effects that the release of firefighting water into soil and waters can have on humans and the environment, both within and across countries, have been demonstrated by several major accidents, such as at the Sandoz (1986, Switzerland), Brenntag (2006, Spain) and Remiva (2011, Czechia) companies. Despite the serious risks, in many countries there are gaps in the national legislation, and the size requirements for water retention basins remain unclear.

## **How can the safety guidelines help?**

These safety guidelines and good practices have been developed to support governments, competent authorities and operators in minimizing the risk of fire and safely retaining firefighting water. They are intended to enhance existing practices and promote harmonized safety standards for firefighting water management and retention, in order to prevent accidental pollution of soil and water, including pollution that could cause transboundary effects.

## **Where are the safety guidelines available?**

The guidelines are available on the UNECE webpage in English, French and Russian ([www.unece.org/index.php?id=51223](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51223)). They were developed by the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents in cooperation with the Expert Group on Fire-water Retention and supported by the UNECE secretariat.

## **For questions and further information:**

Industrial Accidents Convention: [ece-teia.conv@un.org](mailto:ece-teia.conv@un.org)

Water Convention: [water.convention@un.org](mailto:water.convention@un.org)

Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents:  
[www.unece.org/env/teia/jeg.html](http://www.unece.org/env/teia/jeg.html)

