

Oklahoma Kill Response Management Team (OKRMT)

Our Mission

The mission of OKRMT is to facilitate communication and collaboration between government entities regarding fish kills, and to provide a framework for coordinated, consistent, and effective fish kill response. Fish kills may include other wildlife, such as freshwater mussels.

Effective Response

Effective response is essential to identify the causes of fish kills and responsible parties, if they exist. These efforts also allow for informed policy decisions to protect fish and wildlife resources, waters of the state and human health.

Member Agencies and Tribal Partners

- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Oklahoma Water Resources Board
- Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
- Oklahoma Corporation Commission
- Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Cherokee Nation
- Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
- Chickasaw Nation
- Choctaw Nation
- Citizen Potawatomie Nation
- Delaware Nation
- Iowa Tribe
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Ponca Tribe
- Sac and Fox Nation
- Thlopthlocco (Creek) Tribal Town
- Wyandotte Nation
- Grand River Dam Authority
- U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- U.S. Geological Survey



Above: OKRMT logo
Below: Discovery of dead fish.



This publication is issued by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality authorized by Rob Singletary, Executive Director. Copies have been prepared at a cost of \$0.159 each. Copies have been deposited with the publications clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.
(Fact Sheets\SELS\OKRMT.indd 9/2025)

Q: Why a Consolidated Approach?

A consolidated approach to the management of fish kills in Oklahoma results in more organized and timely responses and allows for better communication between front line and office staff. A consolidated approach provides for the following important opportunities:

- opportunity for participating agencies to share expertise and resources,
- shared training opportunities,
- standardization of fish kill reporting, and
- increased awareness of fish kill events.

Q: Who is a First Responder?

First responders are those individuals first arriving at the scene of a fish kill. They may be a government agency with jurisdiction, or an agency without jurisdiction, but first on the scene.

Q: Who is a Second Responder?

Second responders are individuals arriving at the scene of a fish kill after first responders. They may be notified of the fish kill by the first responder and/or the first responder's designated contact or supervisor. Second responders prevent further damage to the environment, increased health risks to humans and loss of natural resources. They may also determine the responsible party and can enforce penalties.

Inter-Agency Notifications

DEQ established an inter-agency email notification list (FishKillAlerts@deq.ok.gov),¹ to facilitate communication among interested parties. The list includes the member agencies and tribal partners of OKRMT, members of other agencies who wish to be notified of fish kills, the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office, other tribal contacts, and key DEQ staff.

Each entity on the notification list is responsible for the accuracy of their contact information. Requests for changes to the distribution list should be sent to DEQ, who will periodically update the list.

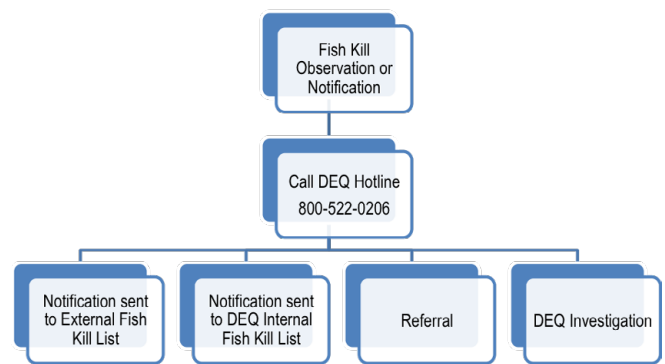
Communication Flow

DEQ will notify the entities on the notification list when it receives information about a fish kill, either through its Complaints Hotline or another means. Those receiving the notification may distribute the notification to relevant staff, if not on the list.

Figure 1 demonstrates the general communication flow upon notification or observation of a fish kill. Fish kill events should be called into the DEQ's 24/7 hotline so the report can be entered into the DEQ Event Management System for tracking. This ensures there is a central location in which fish kill information and data can be maintained across jurisdictional areas of responsibility.

DEQ will notify entities on the email distribution list when a fish kill is reported. Other entities may be notified and their assistance requested. Tribal jurisdiction includes events that are contained on tribal land; however, this does not prevent a tribe from requesting assistance or preclude tribes from notifying the state in the event of a fish kill that could affect waters of the State of Oklahoma.

Figure 1. General communication flow



First Responders

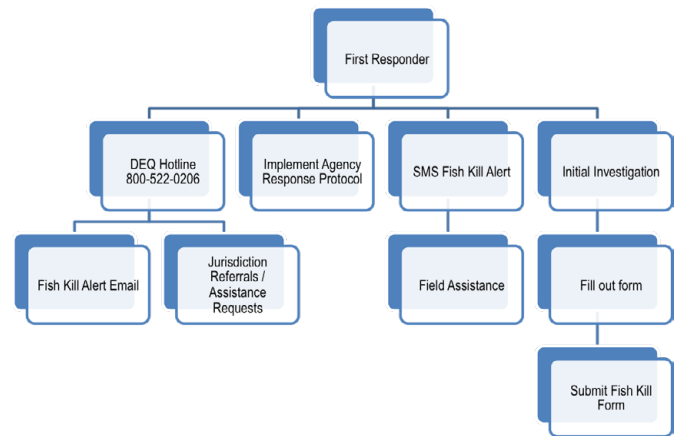
First responders are essential for identifying the source causing the fish kill, potential responsible parties, and collecting critical information about the scene of the fish kill. Figure 2 reflects the first responder's role in effective communication.

In addition to assessing the scene, a first responder should do the following when approaching a fish kill:

- Call the DEQ Hotline at (800) 522-0206².
- Proceed with their agency response protocol, which may vary among agencies.
- Conduct an initial investigation.
- Complete the Oklahoma Inter-Agency Fish Kill Report or request a copy from ECLS if necessary.
- Submit the Fish Kill Report to DEQ by email to eclscompoff@deq.ok.gov.^{*}

^{}ECLS staff may complete the EMS fillable form once back in the office. All other forms will be uploaded into EMS and associated with the appropriate EMS record.*

Figure 2. First responder communication flow



²DEQ will update EMS with information regarding the fish kill, notify the entities on the fish kill notification list, and notify the agency with jurisdiction, if it is not on the notification list.

^{*}DEQ will update EMS with information regarding the fish kill, notify the entities on the fish kill notification list, and notify the agency with jurisdiction, if it is not on the notification list.