

## **U.S. Coast Guard – Fact Sheet**

### **Agency Role.**

Pollution responses can involve a large number of organizations due to the potential for widespread and diverse impacts. Government agencies at several levels may have jurisdiction over different aspects of a pollution response. To ensure effective coordination, lead agencies have been designated within the National Response System to coordinate or direct pollution response efforts. While many pollution incidents are small and are cleaned up by the responsible party under the supervision of local authorities, the National Response System ensures that state and federal resources are available to ensure adequate cleanup on larger or more complex spills. Within the National Response System, the Coast Guard has been designated as the lead agency for oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents occurring within the coastal zone of the U.S. As the co-chair of the Regional Response Team, the Coast Guard coordinates the regional RRT decisions and actions necessary to support an incident specific discharge or release of an oil or hazardous substance within the coastal zone. The Coast Guard also supplies the pre-designated federal On Scene Coordinator (OSC) for oil or hazardous substance pollution incidents occurring within the coastal zone.

### **Responsibilities.**

- As the co-chair of the Regional Response Team, the Coast Guard coordinates the regional RRT decisions and actions necessary to support an incident specific discharge or release of an oil or hazardous substance within the coastal zone.
- The Coast Guard also supplies the pre-designated federal On Scene Coordinator (OSC) for oil or hazardous substance pollution incidents occurring within the coastal zone. The FOSC is the lead federal official for pollution response. The FOSC's responsibilities include coordinating all containment, removal, and disposal efforts and resources during a pollution incident including federal, state, local, and responsible party efforts.
- Support and carryout the broad, national priorities, and framework delineated within the National Contingency Plan (NCP) to ensure efficient, coordinated, and effective action to minimize the effects of oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents.
- Develop, support and carryout the regional priorities and framework delineated within the Regional Contingency Plan (RCP) to ensure efficient, coordinated, and effective action to minimize the effects of oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents.
- Provide the coordination for the development and maintenance of the Coastal Area Contingency Plans (ACPs). The ACPs are the focal point of response planning, providing detailed information on response procedures, priorities, and appropriate countermeasures.
- Ensure that the plans of the National Response System are regularly exercised. This ensures that the plans are current and that responsibilities assigned by the plan are tested and understood. Lessons learned from responses and drills should be shared nationally.
- Provide the leadership within the coastal zone for the formation of a Unified Command to include federal, state, and responsible party lead officials, because they share the goal of performing a rapid and effective response. The Unified Command retains the underlying authorities of the federal and state officials, while allowing the three response teams to integrate and follow a joint incident action plan.
- Properly manage the use of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Fund to adequately fund the

proper emergency response actions of the Unified Command.

### **Capabilities and Abilities.**

Specifically the Coast Guard can provide:

- **RRT.** Co-Chair for the Regional Response Team
- **FOSC.** The pre-designated Federal On Scene Coordinator for oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents occurring within the coastal zone of the U.S. Leadership for the activation and implementation of the Unified Command.
- **ICS.** Personnel resources to support the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) organization which is built around five major management activities:
  - **Incident Command Staff.** Functions include: safety, public information, and liaison activities.
  - **Operations.** Conducts tactical operations to carryout an action plan.
  - **Planning.** Develops the action plan to accomplish objectives, collects and evaluates information, tracks resources status, and documents the response effort.
  - **Logistics.** Provides support and resources to meet incident needs.
  - **Finance.** Monitors costs, accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analysis for the incident.
- **District Response Group (DRG).** DRG assets comprised of personnel, small boats, patrol boats, large cutters, buoy tenders, fixed and rotary aircraft, "first aid" pollution response equipment, Vessel of Opportunity Skimming Systems (VOSS), communications packages both radio and telephonic, and administrative support.
- **Pollution Response Funding.** The use of the OSLTF or CERCLA Fund to fund agency and Unified Command activities during a pollution incident.
- **Private Sector or Government Contracting.** The contracting for pollution abatement/cleanup resources, salvage, fire fighting, and other pollution response or administrative resources or services.
- **Coast Guard National Strike Force (NSF).** The NSF could provide the following:
  - Spill assessment, response operations strategy
  - Supervision and monitoring of operations at the pollution incident site
  - Response planning and consultation associated with the pollution response techniques and equipment use
  - Site Safety Oversight
  - Provide the following resources:
    - + Large pump ready load
    - + Inflatable boom ready load
    - + Open Water Oil Containment and Recovery System (OWOCRS)
    - + VOSS
    - + Containment booms
    - + Temporary storage containers
    - + Product transfer equipment
    - + Personnel protective equipment
    - + Communications gear

**Response Scenarios.** The Coast Guard would be the lead federal agency for a discharge or release of an oil or hazardous substance within the coastal zone of the U.S.