



**FINAL DRAFT**

## Best Practices (2005)

(Draft June 28, 2005)

**FINAL DRAFT**

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to share best practices for preparedness and response identified at the annual National Response Team (NRT)/Regional Response Teams (RRT) Co-Chairs Meetings. The RRT Best Practices, herein referred to as Best Practices, provides contingency planners, exercise planners, and responders a reference containing a list of best practices, a short description of the practice, and where additional information may be found, including a point-of-contact (POC).

This document will be updated annually following each NRT/RRT Co-Chairs meeting and subsequently made available to the National Response System (NRS) community.

## DISCLAIMER

The best practices described in this document have not been formally approved or endorsed by the NRT.

## MAINTANENCE OF THE BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENT

This document will be maintained by the NRT's Preparedness Committee and updated annually in June. Input will be provided by the RRT and the NRT, and may include input from the Area Planning Committees (APC), On-Scene Coordinators (OSC) and Removal Managers (RM).

When updating this document, practices for consideration should be submitted in the following format:

**TOPIC TITLE** *{Title should clearly identify the best practice. Incident names or local terminology should be avoided, instead a general title identifying the actual practice should be listed}*

*{Provide very short description of the best practice. To ensure that this document is useful to others, it is important that you briefly explain the benefits or utility of this best practice. If more information is desired, the reader will go to the sources provided on the following lines.}*

**Sponsor:** *{Organization i.e., RRT X}*

**Phone:** *{Official/Available for public domain}*

**POC:** *{Name and Agency / Organization}*

**E-mail:** *{Official business/government address}*

**Web link:** *{If applicable}*

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## **TRAINING & EXERCISES**

### **“AFTER HOURS” EXERCISES FOR VOLUNTEER RESPONDERS**

Approximately 85% of fire departments nationwide are comprised of volunteers. To assist communities that have volunteer fire departments, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region VII has designed and conducted several tabletop and functional exercises during evening hours and on weekends to reach those responders who are not available to participate in exercises during regular work hours. This practice has enhanced the capabilities of local, state, and federal response agencies.

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### **REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING PROGRAM**

The RRT Training Program was developed to conduct extensive training (exercise and presentations) during RRT meetings. A verification letter is provided to each participant participating in the meeting so that they may document their individual efforts to meet the minimum 8-hour requirement for refresher safety training in accordance with 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). To improve the training experience for its members, RRTs must:

1. Identify the training needs and interests of their members;
2. Categorize and prioritize the suggested training subjects;
3. Assign an advocate to each category of potential training subjects;
4. Involve members in the creation and improvement of training programs;
5. Evaluate the needs of the workgroups to allow time to complete projects, discussions, presentations, and training;
6. Request feedback from participants regarding the success of the session, including benefits, limitations, and additional training needs.

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### **USE OF SELECTION GUIDE FOR TRAINING**

The Caribbean RRT and RRT IV utilized Volume I of the Selection Guide for Oil Spill Applied Technologies as a training tool for various spill technologies. The training involves evaluation of specific types of products and includes industry representatives to answer questions concerning product specifics. The programs increase familiarity with the use of the Selection Guide and also with the product information available for non-mechanical response technologies. The use of the Selection Guide as a training tool also proved to be a best practice because it helped identify areas of the Guide in need of revision. Furthermore, it aided in the development of digital job aids, which will form the basis of second volume of the Selection Guide (an RRT-specific volume), which will gather all pertinent information on region-specific countermeasures (i.e. regional dispersant pre-approval policies, In-situ burn policies, bioremediation policies, other pre-approvals, guidance, operational considerations, and planning developed specifically for the region).

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## **COORDINATION & OUTREACH**

### **LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE HOTZONE CONFERENCE**

Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Conferences have been held regularly for the past 10 years and the Hotzone Conference (to improve technical training and promote professional relationships in Region VI) has been conducted for the past 5 years. Both are well-attended, bring in nationally known speakers, and provide attendees with outstanding information on relevant topics.

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**Web link:** [www.hotzone.org](http://www.hotzone.org)

### **LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE NEWSLETTER**

Since 1988, this bi-monthly newsletter is used to update all LEPCs, fire, police, and sheriff departments within Region VI. The LEPC Newsletter provides articles on current preparedness/response issues, as well as activities within the region. The electronic update can be found on the LEPC webpage.

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### **WATER SECURITY WORKSHOPS**

EPA Regions V & VII conducted more than ten water security workshops and one large water security and preparedness conference which brought together first responders, water utilities, public health, and local, state and federal response agencies. Training sessions, expert speakers and tabletop exercises, along with networking opportunities made these workshops a success. Presentations from the conference are available at [www.mwsecurityconf.com](http://www.mwsecurityconf.com).

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## **REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM MEETINGS**

### **JOINT REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM/REGIONAL INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Joint Regional Response Team (RRT)/Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) meetings help build relations and improve coordination between crisis and consequence responders.

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### **STATE/CO-CHAIR SESSIONS DURING RRT MEETING**

Holding an Executive Steering Committee meeting at the end of the full RRT meetings, where the Co-Chairs and State representatives discuss issues separate from the full RRT meeting, proved to be a valuable practice. The State/Co-Chair Sessions engender freer exchange of thoughts and opinions.

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## TACTICS

### **ALASKA TACTICS MANUAL**

Within Alaska the oil industry has developed several internal tactics manuals to assist responders in effectively deploying pre-staged oil spill response equipment. The *Alaska Tactics Manual* is being developed to pool these diverse efforts and strengthen links to traditional contingency planning requirements. The goal is to standardize the tactics where appropriate, develop common terminology, and improve procedures for incorporating this information into response incident action plans.

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### **HILO "BURRITO" – CONTAMINATED SOIL RECOVERY**

At the Hilo "Burrito" site on the Big Island of Hawaii, contaminated soil (wrapped in plastic resembling a burrito) was removed in July and August 2004 to prevent the threat of a hazardous substance release into a flood control channel and soccer fields located in a tsunami zone of the Hilo waterfront. Successful coordination for this soil removal effort between federal, state, and county government resources (including equipment used and landfill disposal), reduced the U.S. EPA's cost by approximately \$325,000.

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### **INLAND RIVER VESSEL MOVEMENT CENTER INTEGRATION WITH COAST GUARD COMMAND & CONTROL SYSTEM**

This system requires all barges carrying any of 8 classes of certain dangerous cargoes (several hundred individual products) to track their positions. Although reports are required only when a vessel is north of mile 235 on the Lower Mississippi River, several companies voluntarily report all vessel movements, including those along the Gulf Coast. Every report made to the Inland River Vessel Movement Center (IRVMC) is uploaded to a Coast Guard (CG) Command and Control system that creates a "near real time" picture of vessels in the system. This C2 system worked well in tracking barge locations during the 2004 hurricanes.

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### **CROSS-REGIONAL CONCURRENCE/CONSULTATION PROCESS**

During the response to the Motor/Vessel (M/V) ATHOS I, the process of cross-regional concurrence between regions II and III via conference call was effective for timely decision-making.

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## **RESPONSE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION**

### **USE OF NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT COORDINATION AS ENVIRONMENTAL UNIT LEADER IN UNIFIED COMMAND POST**

During the response to a potential biological agent onboard the M/V RIO PUELO, having a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Scientific Support Coordinator (SSC) in the Unified Command Post (CP) as the Environmental Unit Leader (EUL) proved invaluable for the Unified Command (UC). The EUL was able to filter and sort all data coming from various scientists and provide the UC with answers and recommendations.

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### **EPA EMERGENCY RESPONSE PERSONNEL IN “TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE” ROLES, NOT AS “ON-SCENE COORDINATORS”**

EPA OSCs provided technical assistance to the US Coast Guard’s (USCG) pre-designated OSC in many roles during the Athos spill, including staffing positions within the Unified Command’s Environmental Unit, and conducting water monitoring and Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Team (SCAT) activities. EPA also provided technical assistance during the Rio Puelo incident, in support of the USCG OSC. Such cooperative and collaborative efforts are a new and positive partnership between EPA and USCG OSCs.

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### **IMPLEMENTING A UNIFIED COMMAND**

Implementing a UC includes forging and maintaining a UC in a Common Incident Command Post. The Incident Command Post (ICP) should be positioned out of harm’s way and control access to the CP. The facility used must be large enough to accommodate 20 + people and ensure the appropriate agencies are represented and present in the CP. As quickly as possible gather objectives and establish periodic meeting schedule.

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### **GREAT LAKES SPECIFIC “SPECIAL TEAMS GUIDEBOOK”**

The intent of this guidebook is to bring special teams together to develop a Great Lakes contact and capabilities reference. These teams are from the U.S. and Canada, and are trained to respond to oil or hazardous materials releases and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The reference will aid responders in determining which special teams and categories of technical expertise are necessary for a particular incident. The reference will also help determine which teams have jurisdiction, functional authority, and the capability to execute response actions. Interoperability, especially between U.S. and Canadian agencies, will also be addressed.

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## **PLANNING**

### **NET ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS**

Net Environmental Benefit Analysis (NEBA) identifies potential impacts, adverse effects, and potential response strategies resulting from a large oil spill at a specific location. NEBA involves determining advantages and disadvantages of various oil spill response strategies for flora and fauna and their habitats, compared with no response. NEBA is a facilitated process driven by the attendees to isolate issues and identify alternative response measures.

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### **ONE GULF AREA CONTINGENCY PLAN**

Completed in July, 2004, the One Gulf Area Contingency Plan provides a one stop reference for spill responders in the Coastal areas within the 8th District of the U.S. Coast Guard. The One Gulf Plan offers improved consistency across the coastal region by utilizing a single format. It is maintained on the Texas General Land Office website and uses Hyper Links for easy navigation thereby increasing accessibility and ease of use. The One Gulf Plan has also reduced required work by unifying the planning efforts of the area committees along the Gulf Coast Region and relying on contractor support to complete ACP updates. The One Gulf Plan, which complies with the requirements of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, also provides a cross reference for tactics and shared resources among all the ACPs.

**Sponsor:** RRT VI

**POC:** CDR Nathalie Valley, USCG

**Web link:** <http://www.glo.state.tx.us/oilspill/Atlas/atlas/acp/onegulfplan.pdf>

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### **ADEQUATE BACKUP SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

Adequate backup support systems include the development of operating procedures, training, and exercise with response and other support personnel to provide a means of adequately managing large scale events. These support systems should also provide administrative and procurement personnel within training and exercises emphasizing the importance of acquiring needed resources. Lastly, the systems should include the development of a mechanism for on-going training and communication with backup support personnel.

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### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE REVIEWS**

EPA Region VI has begun conducting Emergency Response Reviews to assist local officials in evaluating the effectiveness of a response to a chemical release. Region VI has conducted 12 reviews to date, each of which has successfully helped local officials reassess and improve their response capabilities and readiness. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and each state collaborate with EPA on these reviews.

**Sponsor:** RRT VI

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## **PLACES OF REFUGE**

Leaking or disabled vessels may require a sheltered location with adequate water depth to conduct repairs or lightering. Planning for places of refuge in Prince William Sound, Alaska has focused on the development of innovative mapping products to assist decision makers. The on-line maps provide coordinated navigational data, as well as information regarding stakeholder concerns, environmental resources, and responder capabilities/strategies.

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**Web link:** <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/perp/pwspor/home.htm>

## **INLAND SENSITIVITY ATLASES**

The U.S. EPA Region V Inland Sensitivity Atlas series is a set of Geographic Information System (GIS) products designed to complement Oil Pollution Act (OPA) mandated planning. The Inland Sensitivity Atlases identify state and federal endangered and threatened species, public and privately held land with environmental importance, sources of spills, locks, dams, marinas and boat access points. The atlases cover all six states in Region V. The mapping area products are available in several digital formats as well as in hard-copy format.

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## **SPECIAL SECURITY EVENTS (SSE)**

### **RE-CYCLING AND JOINT PLANNING FOR EVENTS REQUIRING SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL SECURITY**

Although the Democratic National Convention (DNC) and Republican National Convention (RNC) were held in different locations, Boston and New York respectively, and a month apart, RRT I planned jointly for both national security events. By borrowing and adapting existing plans as well as conducting joint planning, RRT I avoided duplicative efforts and ensured that their plans would be effective.

While national security events necessitate the pre-deployment of resources and staff, typically there is little activity pre and post-event. RRT I took advantage of this “down-time” by conducting mini-training exercises. The presence of various response organizations also served as an opportunity to learn about the capabilities of the other groups. The DNC/RNC thereby provided a valuable interagency training and coordination opportunity.

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## **WEB PAGES**

### **EPA/OSC WEBPAGE**

OSCs in EPA Region VI are currently using the EPA/OSC webpage as a means to disseminate photos, Pollution Reports (POLREP), and other pertinent information on emergency responses in a timely manner. Interested parties can quickly be updated on the current status of responses, resources being utilized and contact information.

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**LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE WEBPAGE / REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM WEBPAGE**

The LEPC and RRT web pages provide contact, statutory, and regulatory information, as well as assistance guides, documents, and brochures. By relying on their websites, LEPCs and RRTs are able to maximize the amount of preparedness and response information disseminated and widen audience reached.

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## ACRONYM LIST

ACP – AREA CONTINGENCY PLAN  
APC – AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE  
CFR – CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS  
CG – (US) COAST GUARD  
CP – COMMAND POST  
DNC – DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION  
DOD – DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
EPA – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
EUL – ENVIRONMENTAL UNIT LEADER  
FEMA – FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
GIS – GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM  
ICP – INCIDENT COMMAND POST  
IRVMC – INLAND RIVER VESSEL MOVEMENT CENTER  
LEPC – LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE  
M/V – MOTOR/VESSEL  
NEBA – NET ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT ANALYSIS  
NOAA – NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
NRS – NATIONAL RESPONSE SYSTEM  
NRT – NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM  
OPA – OIL POLLUTION ACT  
OSC – ON-SCENE COORDINATOR  
POC – POINT OF CONTACT  
POLREP – POLLUTION REPORT  
RISC – REGIONAL INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE  
RNC – REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION  
RPM – REMOVAL MANAGERS  
RRT – REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM  
SCAT – SHORELINE CLEANUP AND ASSESSMENT TEAM  
SSC – SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT COORDINATOR  
SSE – SPECIAL SECURITY EVENT  
SUPSALV – SUPERVISOR OF SALVAGE  
UC – UNIFIED COMMAND  
USCG – UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
USN – UNITED STATES NAVY  
WMD – WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION