2000 Command

Section 2000 will only provide a brief overview and information for the COTP zone specific to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Refer to the IMH to review specific information for all ICS duties and positions. The Incident Commander Job Aid contains information specific to the IC position.

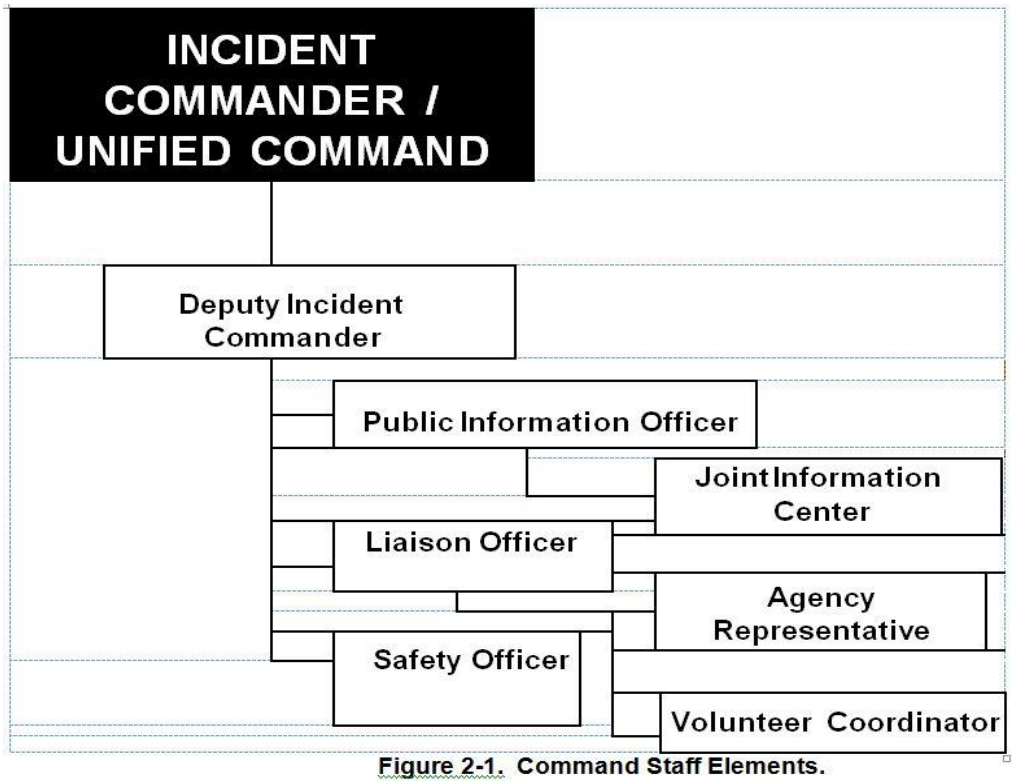

Figure 2-1. Command Staff Elements.

2100 Unified Command – Command Structure

Note that the FOSC has responsibilities set forth in the NCP to see that certain activities will happen in a timely manner.

The Unified Command is a structure that brings together the "IC's" of all major organizations that have jurisdictional authority for the incident to coordinate an effective response while carrying out their own organization's jurisdictional responsibilities. A UC links responding organizations to the incident and provides them a forum to make decisions together. Under a UC, organizations should blend together throughout the ICS organization to create an integrated response team.

To be a member of the UC, a participating organization must have underlying statutory authority or legal obligation to carry out proposed response action and have jurisdiction within the area affected by the incident.

Members of the UC may also include agencies, organizations, private industries, or owners and operators of waterfront facilities and vessels bringing large amounts of tactical and support resources to the table.

The UC is responsible for overall management of an incident. The UC directs incident activities including the development and implementation of incident objectives, strategies, and approves ordering and releasing of
resources.

While the UC structure is an excellent vehicle – and the only nationally recognized vehicle – for tactical-level incident command, coordination, cooperation, and communication, the duly authorized UC members must make the system work successfully. The UC should develop synergy using the significant capabilities brought by its diverse members. While varied perspectives on UC and contentious issues arising from the incident may cause disagreement, resolution can reached by using the UC framework, which provides a forum and process to resolve problems and find solutions. The UC is not a committee; in a situation where consensus cannot be reached, the UC member representing the agency with the most legal / jurisdictional authority would normally be deferred to for the final decision. Inability to provide clear incident objectives and response direction means that UC has failed.

Some agencies that may be included in the UC for the COTP AOR include the USCG, FBI, DOD, EPA, EQB, PREMA, DPNR, VITEMA, the Responsible Party, and at times municipal, county or regional emergency managers and other federal/state agencies. Incident specific UC structures can be found in the organization charts in each incident specific appendix (i.e., Terrorism, Oil, Hazardous Substances, Radiological, and Biological Annexes).

In order to keep the UC limited in size, and therefore efficient, it is recommended that one federal agency be the lead agency to coordinate activities and actions among the various federal agencies involved; this concept applies to state and tribal representation on the UC as well. UC members of other organizations should be encouraged to participate on the IMT in the functions that best suit their expertise. UC members may also be assigned individual legal and administrative support from their own organizations. Participation in the UC occurs without any organization abdicating authority, responsibility, or accountability. In addition to selecting the primary agency/organization to staff critical IMT staff positions at the Incident Command (e.g., PIO, LOFR, OSC, and PSC), UC members should also agree on the number of personnel/organizations filling deputy positions. Deputy Section Chiefs can run the Section while the Section Chief is in meetings and help manage span of control issues within the Section. To be considered for inclusion as a UC representative, the involved organization must meet the criteria outlined on page 5-4 of the IMH.

For information regarding the Area Command structure, refer to Chapter 13 of the IMH and the Area Command Job Aid.

2110 Command Representatives

2110.1 Federal Representative

The NCP, 40 CFR 300, requires FOSCs to direct response efforts and coordinate all other actions at the scene of a spill or release. The FOSC is the pre-designated Federal official responsible for ensuring immediate and effective response to a discharge or threatened discharge of oil or a hazardous substance. The U.S. Coast Guard designates FOSCs for the U. S. coastal zones, while the U. S. EPA designates FOSCs for the U. S. inland zones. The first Federal official affiliated with a NRT member agency to arrive at the scene of a discharge should coordinate activities under the NCP and is authorized to initiate, in consultation with the FOSC, any necessary actions normally carried out by the FOSC until the arrival of the pre-designated FOSC. This official may initiate federal fund-financed actions only as authorized by the FOSC.

The FOSC shall, to the extent practicable and as soon as possible after the incident occurs, collect pertinent facts about the discharge, such as its source and cause; identify responsible parties, the nature, amount, and location of discharged materials along with predicting the trajectory of discharged materials; then determine whether the discharge is a worst case discharge, the pathways to human and environmental exposure, the potential impact on human health, welfare, safety and the environment and whether the discharge poses a substantial threat to the public health or welfare. Next, the FOSC shall identify the potential impact on natural resources and property, and discuss priorities for protecting human health, welfare and the environment. Lastly, the FOSC must ensure appropriate resource documentation.

OPA 90 requires that each ACP, when implemented in conjunction with the NCP "be adequate to remove a worst case discharge, and to mitigate or prevent substantial threat of such a discharge, from a vessel, offshore facility, or onshore facility operating in or near the area." A worst case discharge is defined as "in the case of a vessel, a discharge in adverse weather of its entire cargo; and in the case of an offshore or onshore facility, the largest foreseeable discharge in adverse weather conditions." For the purposes of this plan the worst case discharge is the total loss of cargo from the largest ship operating in the port under adverse weather conditions.

The FOSC shall ensure that the trustees for natural resources are promptly notified of discharges. The FOSC shall coordinate all response activities with the affected natural resource trustees and shall consult with the affected trustees on the appropriate removal action to be taken. When the FOSC becomes aware that a discharge may affect any endangered or threatened species, or their habitat, the FOSC shall consult with the appropriate natural resource trustee.

2110.2 State Representative

The State representative, known as the State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC), is responsible to ensure all pertinent resource, cultural, archaeological, environmental and economic issues are discussed and decisions within the UC are based on sound state-specific information. This individual must be able to make decisions with minimal internal agency consultation.

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico - The owner, operator, or person-in-charge of a vessel or facility or any person causing a discharge of oil or release of a hazardous substance is liable for such a discharge/release shall immediately notify the appropriate federal and state agencies (i.e., EQB and the cognizant FOSC EPA-inland, USCG-coastal).

If the RP does not take action or the actions are not satisfactory for cleanup, SOSC will begin response actions working with the appropriate federal agency. SOSC will maintain a close working relationship with the USCG (for coastal zone incidents) and the EPA (for inland zone incidents) for support and federal funding, as necessary, when using the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) or the Superfund for its response.

Territory of U.S Virgin Islands - The owner, operator, or person-in-charge of a vessel or facility or any person causing a discharge of oil or release of a hazardous substance is liable for such a discharge/release shall immediately notify the appropriate federal and state agencies (i.e., EQB and the cognizant FOSC EPA-inland, USCG-coastal). If the RP does not take action or the actions are not satisfactory for cleanup, SOSC will begin response actions working with the appropriate federal agency. SOSC will maintain a close working relationship with the USCG (for coastal zone incidents) and the EPA (for inland zone incidents) for support and federal funding, as necessary, when using the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) or the Superfund for its response.

2110.3 Responsible Party Representative

Under OPA 90, the Responsible Party has primary responsibility for cleanup of a discharge. The response shall be conducted in accordance with their applicable response plan. Section 4201(a) of OPA 90 states that an owner or operator of a tank vessel or facility participating in the removal efforts shall act in accordance with the National Contingency Plan (NCP) and the applicable response plans as required. Section 4202 of OPA 90 states that these response plans shall be consistent with the requirements of the NCP and ACPs. Each owner or operator of a tank vessel or facility required by OPA 90 to submit a response plan shall do so in accordance with applicable regulations. Facility, tank vessel, and non-tank vessel response plan regulations, including plan requirements, are located in Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 154 and 155, respectively. As defined in OPA 90, each Responsible Party for a vessel or a facility from which oil is discharged, or which poses a substantial threat of a discharge into or upon the navigable waters of the United States or adjoining shorelines or the Exclusive Economic Zone is liable for the removal costs and damages specified in Subsection (b) of Section 1002 of OPA 90.

Any removal activity undertaken by a RP must be consistent with the provisions of the NCP, RCP, ACP, and the applicable response plan required by OPA 90. Each RP for a vessel or facility from which a hazardous substance is released, or which poses a substantial threat of a discharge, is liable for removal costs as specified in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.).

The RP is required under OPA 90 to engage resources as necessary to respond to spills, including hazardous materials. In many cases, RP contracted Spill Management Teams (SMTs) will arrive from out-of-town which involves an inherent logistical delay. Additionally, it is reasonable to expect that many members of the contract team will be essentially unfamiliar with the local port and environmental conditions. Typically their local knowledge will be in large part based solely on the Area Contingency Plan. Therefore, additional time may be necessary after their on-scene arrival to familiarize themselves with local issues prior to assuming any responsibilities within the FOSCs command and control organization.

The NCP requires that response plan holders “prepare and submit a plan for responding, to the maximum extent practicable, to a worst case discharge, and to a substantial threat of such a discharge of oil or release of a hazardous substance. These response plans are required to be consistent with applicable Area Contingency Plans.” The requirement for facility and vessel response plans to be consistent with the PR and USVI ACP applies to: vessel and facility contingency plan: content, review and approval; the execution and evaluation of spill drills and exercises; and the management of spill response actions. It is also the policy of the PR and USVI Area Committee that the unified command will encourage the party responsible for a spill incident to maintain the primary responsibility for managing the response action so long as they:

- Actively and cooperatively participate in the unified command structure;
- Provide an organization that is compatible with NIIMS ICS;
- Provide regular communication and documentation that assures adequate response resources are being rapidly mobilized in proportion to the size of the incident.
- Follow their approved spill contingency/response plan (if applicable) unless otherwise directed or a deviation is agreed to, by the Unified Command.

2120 Guidance for Setting Response Objectives

Example incident objectives can be viewed on pages 4-4 to 4-8 of the IMH and in the example Incident Action, Plan Response Objective (ICS-202).

Criteria for developing response objectives should follow “SMART”:

Specific – Is the objective straightforward; can it be readily understood by those set forth to achieve it?

Measurable – What are the measures to determine desired progress or if the end state has been achieved?

Attainable – Realistic; Can the end state be achieved as desired (time, quality, cost, etc.)?

Realistic – Is the objective achievable within the next operational period?

Time sensitive – Can the objective be met through clear tasking?

The objectives are also flexible enough to allow for strategic and tactical alternatives.

2130 Unified Command General Response Objectives and Priorities

The Unified Command will set response priorities, identify any limitations and constraints, develop incident objectives and establish guidelines for the Incident Management Team to follow.

While incident specific objectives are located in each annex of this ACP, typical operational objectives for the **initial response (emergency) phase** for most incidents include (in no particular order):

- Provide for the safety and welfare of citizens and response personnel.
- Search and rescue operations for persons in distress.
- Confirm/execute all notifications to concerned local, county, state, and federal agencies.
- Establish medical triage and arrange for transport to hospital.
- Firefighting operations.
- Implement measures to isolate, contain, and stabilize the incident including the establishment and adjustment of security perimeters.
- Initiate actions to stop or control the source of an oil discharge or hazardous substance release and minimize the total volume released.
- Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas, including wildlife, habitats, and historic properties.

Typical operational objectives for the **first operational period** include (in no particular order):

- Maintain situational awareness through a systematic and planned process for tasking, collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information.
- Implement the UC/IC organization and verify operations are being conducted in conformity with the NIMS/ICS.
- Begin relocation of IC functions from on-scene unified operations group operations center to an off-site/suitable Incident Command Post.
- Commence Incident Planning cycle, including initial Incident Action Plan.
- Examine key response financial issues (see Section 6000 of this plan).
- Liaison Officer: initiate contact with local municipalities and establish communication channels.

- Safety Officer: develop, train, and deploy initial site-specific safety and health plan (provide Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)) by coordinating with contractor and government safety plans.
- Information Officer: Define/confirm media relations approach with Unified Command; establish Joint Information Center, prepare first press release and organize first media briefing.

Typical operational objectives for the **second operational period** include (in no particular order):

- Transition from immediate operations driven response posture to a pre-planned operations remediation posture.
- Conduct routine situation briefings.
- Conduct daily objectives, tactics, and planning meetings in accordance with established response meeting schedule.

2140 Unified Command Initial Action Considerations

- Determine need to initiate Critical Incident Communications procedures.
- Is establishing a Unified Command appropriate, and who shall be members of Unified Command?
- Work with the Unified Command, Operations and Planning Sections to determine the control zones (hot, warm, cold).
- Has Unified Command communicated location of zones to response personnel?
- Document Safe to Respond determination.
- Is the incident the result or possible result of a terrorist act?
- Should the Maritime Security Level (MARSEC) be increased?
- Determine need to notify Coast Guard Investigative Service Resident Agent of the incident or any other appropriate law enforcement agency.
- Determine who will be in charge of the investigation and how it relates to the response (e.g., whether it will be included in the ICS organization).
- Determine if there are the right type, kind and quantity of resources to respond. Consider mobilizing:
  - USCG Atlantic Area (LANTAREA) Incident Management Team (IMAT) for incident management assistance.
  - USCG Atlantic Strike Team for response expertise and resources.
  - NOAA SSC for environmental and scientific assistance.
  - USCG Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST) for port security force augmentation.
  - Other special teams as appropriate.
- Establish appropriate battle rhythm (e.g., operational period and/or need for nighttime operations).
- Determine if the complexity of incident response operations are such that the command team would benefit from an ICS Technical Expert.

2200 Safety

Coast Guard employees, other government employees, and contract personnel involved in response activities ***must comply*** with all applicable worker health and safety laws and regulations. The primary federal regulations are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for hazardous waste operations and emergency response found in 29 CFR 1910.120.

This rule regulates the safety and health of employees involved in cleanup operations at uncontrolled hazardous waste sites being cleaned up under government mandate and in certain hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal operations conducted under the Resource Conservation and Releases Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA). The regulations also apply to both emergency response and post-emergency cleanup of hazardous substances. The definition of hazardous substance used in these regulations is much broader than CERCLA, encompassing all CERCLA hazardous substances, RCRA hazardous waste, and all Department of Transportation (DOT) hazardous materials listed in 49 CFR Part 172. Thus, most oil and hazmat responses are covered by these regulations. The rules cover employee protection during initial site characterization analysis, monitoring activities, materials handling activities, training, and emergency response.

2210 Safety Regulations

OSHA classifies an area impacted by oil as an uncontrolled hazardous waste site. However, the regulations do not automatically apply to an oil spill cleanup. There must be an operation that involves employee exposure or the reasonable possibility for employee exposure to safety or health hazards. A typical beach cleanup worker collecting tar balls of weathered oil or deploying sorbents to collect sheen may be exposed to a safety or health risk. The role of the Site Safety and Health Supervisor (the Coast Guard District Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator could fill this position) is to assess the site, determine the safety and health hazards present, and determine if OSHA regulations apply. If an OSHA field compliance officer is on-scene, he or she should be consulted to determine the applicability of OSHA regulations. Disputes should be referred to the Department of Labor representative on the RRT. The individual making the site characterization should communicate the hazards associated with the incident, and provide recommendations through the site safety plan for the safety and health of response personnel.

The responsibility for the health and safety of personnel supporting a pollution response mission rests with the FOSC. For oil spill responses where OSHA regulations apply, the FOSC must ensure that paragraphs (b) through (o) of 29 CFR 1910.120 are followed. Coast Guard personnel assigned to a Sector and routinely involved in pollution response should complete, at a minimum, a 24 hour course meeting OSHA training requirements in paragraph (e) of 29 CFR 1910.120. Training records should reflect that OSHA requirements have been satisfied. Contractors are responsible for certifying the training of their employees.

OSHA has recognized the need to remove oil from the environment and has empowered the OSHA representative to the RRT to reduce the training requirement to a minimum of 4 hours for responders engaged in post emergency response operations. An example of a post emergency response effort is shoreline cleanup operations. The reduced training applies to all Coast Guard personnel and to the private sector. This information may be found in OSHA Instruction CPL 2-2.51. The level of training required depends on the potential for exposure. Workers required to use respirators must have 40 hours of off-site training. The OSHA field compliance officer should be contacted to ascertain the worker training requirements and develop an implementation plan to minimize the hazards of exposure to workers involved in cleanup operations. While training requirements may vary from state to state, state requirements that are more restrictive will preempt federal requirements. The OSC should establish contact with the State OSHA representative, where applicable, to determine the state training requirement for a response.

2220 Site Characterization

Prior to sending responders into the scene of a release of oil or hazardous substances, a site characterization and analysis should be performed by a safety professional to determine the hazards that first responders may face at the incident scene. Once all of the hazards have been identified, a safety meeting should be held to discuss the nature of the hazards, how to mitigate such hazards including the wearing of appropriate personnel protective equipment (PPE) and atmospheric monitoring equipment.

2230 Safety Officer

The Safety Officer (SOFR) is to develop and recommend measures to ensure personnel safety and occupational health of not only response workers, but also the public, and to anticipate, recognize, assess, and control hazardous and unsafe conditions or situations. There is only one SOFR for each incident; however, the SOFR may have Assistant Safety Officers (ASOFs), or Technical Specialists THSPs as needed. THSPs maybe be ordered or requested due to a specific skill set they possess, and which is required during incident response. A THSP may come from the same organization as the SOFR or other another organization. THSPs may have responsibilities pertaining to specialized areas (e.g., air operations, occupational health, hazardous substances, salvage, diving, and sanitation). To accomplish all of these functions the SOFR and/or support staff should frequently travel to operational areas, base camps, staging areas, and other locations involving incident activity to identify health and safety hazards, and to verify compliance with applicable federal, state, and local health and safety regulations and with the Incident Health and Safety Plan (HASP). The Safety Officer will correct unsafe acts or conditions through the regular line of authority, although the Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to stop or prevent unsafe acts when immediate action is required. If there is a significant risk to public health or high likelihood of public evacuation, the CG should immediately contact the state or local EOC for support regarding public health and request an ASOF for Public Health.

The Safety Officer may assemble a team of Assistant Safety Officers (ASOF) and Safety Observers as/if the response becomes more complex. The ASOF for Public Health supports the SOFR during complex incidents involving public health concerns by assessing and forecasting public health needs, performing environmental surveillance for public health, and develop public health communications. The ASOF for Public Health should be a public health generalist, preferably from a public health agency, with broad knowledge of public health disciplines exercised during incident response. These additional personnel are assigned to specific components of the response to monitor complex and/or hazardous activities associated with that specific component.

These personnel may include:

- Oil Spill Removal Organization (OSRO) Safety Advisor
- Dive Team Safety Advisor
- Salvage Safety Advisor

Regardless of the make-up or size of the Safety Team, there is only one assigned Safety Officer responsible to ensure all support (operations oversight) and administrative (plans/briefs) activities are conducted.

If the incident is large or complex, consider requesting SOFR support from the:

- US Coast Guard Atlantic Area IMAT;
- US Coast Guard National Strike Force;
- OSHA (or State equivalent agency);
- State safety and health agencies;
- US Coast Guard District 7 Safety Officer;
- Environmental Protection Agency; and
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

SOFR Support to the Incident Action Plan

- Consider including a daily Safety Message in the Incident Action Plan.
- Review the draft ICS-204s (Work Assignments) to determine if there is a need to include any safety guidance, requirements or special “watch out” advisories.
- Review and approve the ICS-206 (Medical Plan) to determine if the plan is compatible with the expected work activities and reflects appropriate notification and transportation procedures.
- Complete site Health and Safety Plan.
- Complete overall Safety Message.

Supporting Plans

Other supporting plans that may be included in the IAP and that the Safety Officer should be actively involved in include:

- *Decontamination Plan:* Ensure that decontamination processes are in compliance with the safety plan. This may incorporate air monitoring and developing PPE protocols for hazardous materials decontamination sites, or may entail confined space entry procedures being implemented for the decontamination of a holding tank on an oil skimming and recovery vessel;
- *Incident Map:* The SOFR should coordinate with the Situation Unit Leader to assure that the map includes the location of the nearest hospitals (if nearby) and other safety related information including designated helispots for emergency medical transport, location of EMT/Paramedics on site, etc.;
- *Chemical Hazard Documentation:* The SOFR must document the hazards of a chemical by reviewing and extracting information from several chemical references including MSDSs. The on-line CAMEO database is a great source of hazardous material information. This information is used to ensure a proper risk assessment is conducted to identify controls for safeguarding responders and the public from the hazards of an incident;
- *Air Monitoring Plans*: The SOFR provides input into air monitoring plans with emphasis on ensuring responders are operating under safe conditions and the public is properly protected;
- *Chemical, Biological, Weapons of Mass Destruction Agent Sampling Plans:* The Safety Officer reviews these plans to ensure the plans are executed in a safe manner and meet the Unified Command's primary goal of protecting responders and the public; and
- *Other Plans:* The Safety Officer may review other plans with the safety of the responder and the public in mind. For example, the Demobilization Plan should be reviewed to ensure personnel and equipment are not demobilized too soon thereby accelerating an existing fatigue or other safety hazard.

2300 Information

The Public Information Officer (PIO) is designated by the Incident Commander/Unified Command to support the information needs of the response. The PIO is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the media and public. Only one PIO will be assigned for each incident, including incidents operating under UC and multi-jurisdiction incidents. The PIO may have assistants as necessary, and the assistants may come from other assisting organizations. The PIO and JIC Job Aids, references (b) through (d) in the IMH, should be reviewed regarding the organization and duties of the PIO. Organizations have different policies and procedures relative to the handling of public information. Refer to pages 6-3 to 6-4 of the IMH for the responsibilities of the PIO.

2310 Protocol for Access/Timing of Media Briefings

2310.1 Media Interaction

The general public's opinion of an oil spill effort is not always based upon what action has been taken, but upon what information they have received.

Supplying information to the media is a critical component of pollution response, and is a primary function of the FOSC. Early and accurate news releases serve to minimize public apprehension and to enhance their faith in the response community's ability to deal with oil spills. The NRT's *Risk Communication for Oil Spill Response* fact sheet provides additional information regarding communications. To ensure an accurate flow of information, a single point of contact or pool of public affairs personnel should be established for media relations. The number of people needed to respond to inquiries will vary depending on the size of the incident and the media interest involved. The FOSC has many resources available to assist with the media. For small spills in the coastal zone, the assistance of the Coast Guard Sector Public Affairs Officer (PAO) may be sufficient. For larger spills with more media interest, it may be necessary to seek assistance from other sources such as the Public Information Assist Team (PIAT), Coast Guard District Public Affairs or private industry.

The following general guidelines are provided:

- Fast and accurate information must be provided to protect public health and obtain public cooperation, and to assist in guarding against further environmental damage.
- Clear communication by spill response authorities is essential for the delivery of accurate information to avert misinformation or rumors sometimes engendered by an emergency.
- The FOSC must immediately establish and maintain his/her position as chief articulator of an incident. It is the Federal and State OSCs role--not the role of the spiller or others--to deliver public statements regarding the effects of a spill, including evaluations of a spill's size, extent, nature, dangers to public health or resources, details of the response plan, the FOSCs expectations for response plan implementation, degree of success or lack of success of a spill response, and the anticipated long-term effects of a spill.
- When a spill occurs the FOSC must immediately open communications with local government officials of affected communities, conveying facts needed by residents for their own response activities and protection of public health and resources. Initial phone calls to establish communication channels with local governments and appropriate organizations, such as fishermen and native groups, should be followed by regular updates through spill bulletins, press releases, and briefings.

2310.2 Community Relations

Providing information directly to members of the impacted community, free of the filtering and potentially distorting effect of the media is critical to public understanding of the incident response. Community relations may include scheduling of public meetings, preparing speeches and coordinating public activities with public officials and protocol personnel.
In order to ensure that important constituents are not overlooked or slighted during a major response, it is important that a Community Relations Officer be assigned to the PIO element. Under no circumstances should community relations be a collateral duty of the PIO during a major incident.

2310.3 Internal Information

Informing the members of the response community of the status of the response is vital if consistent and accurate information is to be conveyed to all interested parties. Internal information is the process of informing our own people of the status of our activities. At a minimum, all personnel assigned to response duties should be provided with access to the daily fact sheet prepared by the media relations officer. This will help ensure a consistent and accurate flow of information.

2310.4 General Logistical Concerns for Press Conferences and News Briefs

Pollution incidents that generate significant media interest normally require press conferences or news briefs. These media gatherings provide an opportunity to film and ask questions of senior response officials. People arranging conferences and briefings should ensure that top officials are available and up-to-speed on any special interest areas. It is beneficial to provide a press release, statement or press packet prior to conducting a press conference. The spokesperson(s) should approach the conference with a clear idea of the specific points to be discussed and anticipate questions that may be posed. Charts, diagrams and other visuals serve to facilitate presentations and clarify response actions.

The Daily Press Briefing

During a significant spill with a rapidly developing situation and the presence of a large number of reporters, a briefing held daily at a pre-established time (10:00 am and 3:00 pm is recommended) is one of the most useful means of delivering information. This is an opportunity for the FOSC and other spokespersons to brief the press and answer their questions, and for other key staff members to follow up with important data. For example, if applicable, natural resource managers should present information on wildlife and fisheries impacts or public health authorities may offer their findings on contamination of local subsistence foods.

It is the information officer's duty to work with the FOSC to prioritize the information according to importance, point out backup factual material and other sources, provide written information for distribution, and conduct the press briefing. Early morning is the best part of the day for the information officer to coordinate the day's press activities and ensure that everyone receives written information and background facts.

These press briefings may relieve the FOSC and other spokespersons of some of the pressure of interviews throughout the remainder of the day, as well as free reporters to proceed with fieldwork. Public buildings in the area which could handle the expected media representatives should be quickly identified as possible locations for planned press conferences, based on size. This may include local CG facilities, fire stations, police stations or other state and local government buildings. One alternative is to conduct a conference or briefing on-scene or from alongside a mobile command post. On-scene conferences or briefings must be carefully coordinated to ensure efforts to control the spill are not disrupted.

For press briefings, efforts should be made to find a location which provides convenient access for federal, state and local officials and which is large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of media personnel.

News Releases, Fact Sheets, and Background Papers

News releases should be reserved for announcements of major decisions, policy changes, or new developments. They must report on items that are actually news, should summarize issues clearly, and provide quotes from decision-makers that encapsulate and clarify the Unified Command's position. Distribution should be to affected communities and all response agencies in addition to the media. Fact sheets should be prepared and updated regularly to present key data needed by the press or the public, such as amounts of oil or hazardous substances spilled or cleaned up, or wildlife mortalities. Background papers should be written to amplify and clarify complex issues and the Unified Command's related actions and policies.

Worksite Media Interest

Some members of the media will request access to the spill site for photo opportunities. Direct access to private property such as facilities, vessels or barges will remain under the control of the owner. It may be advantageous to make a CG vessel available to tour the affected area from the waterside. When media interest exceeds the capacity of the CG vessel, it will be necessary to form a press pool. The selection of participants is best left to members of the media. The media may also obtain their own vessel or aircraft with which to view the spill site. They will continue to be governed by a Security or Safety Zone that may be in effect unless granted specific access by appropriate authority.

Members of the media may also approach personnel at a spill site. If possible, they should be referred to the PIO, the FOSC's representative or to the FOSC (in that order). Agency representative’s on-scene may answer questions regarding their particular role. The rule of thumb is, if it’s your job you can talk about it, if it’s not, then refer them to whomever is responsible. Accompanying a spill of significant public interest will be an increased demand for information from public officials. Coast Guard Public Affairs personnel are also responsible for fielding political inquiries as directed by the FOSC. They should also prepare briefing materials for elected or public officials who may request information about the incident.

2320 Joint Information Center

During a major oil spill when media activity is expected to last several days, the PIO should establish a JIC to coordinate the public affairs activities of participating agencies and parties. The role of the JIC is to provide multiple phone lines for incoming calls, staffed by knowledgeable individuals; and ensure state and federal government Public Information Officers are available to the media. In addition, the JIC develops joint news releases under the UC, and schedules, organizes, and facilitates news conferences.

It is recommended that the JIC be in the same building as the Command Center, but in a room separate from other ICP Sections. PIOs need to be close to the UC and other Sections for effective communication, but not so close as to disturb response operations. Equipment needs for the JIC vary, dependent on the size and impact of the incident, and media and public interest levels. If possible, a separate "Press Room" should be established for reporters' use, at spills that attract a great deal of media interest. This room may be used by reporters covering the story, and would ideally be equipped with several phone lines, electrical outlets, and a couple of desks, tables and chairs. There should be a way to display maps, status boards, and other visual aids that could be used on-camera, and a table near the door for the latest news releases, fact sheets, and advisories. If there is room for seating and a podium with a public announcement (PA) system, the press room is a good site for all formal news conferences. This allows television news crews to set-up cameras in advance, and reporters to do stand-ups and call-ins from an easy, central location.

The NRT JIC Model provides in-depth guidance on how to setup and manage a JIC.

2330 Media Contacts

See Section 9000 for a detailed list of media contacts.

2400 Liaison

2410 Liaison Officer

The role of the Liaison Officer (LOFR) and their staff can be summed up in the phrase, "know the customer."

The LOFR is a vital link in the Incident Command's ability to effectively manage the concerns and issues of elected officials and their staff, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, general public, and industry partners during an incident response. The LOFR is a conduit of information and assistance between organizations and does not normally have delegated authority to make decisions on matters affecting an organization's participation in the incident; however, the IC/UC may assign additional responsibilities or authorities to the LOFR in order to effectively manage complex incidents. Due to the complexity or scope of the incident, the LOFR may require one or more Assistant Liaison Officers (ALOFs) in the ICP or field in order to maintain a manageable span of control. **The ALOF is a representative of the UC and is not a representative of any specific organization.** The Liaison Officer can have a significant impact on stakeholder perceptions regarding the success or appropriateness of the response, especially if they know what is important to these people and organizations.

The IMH (pages 6-4 to 6-6) and the Liaison Officer ICS Job Aid offer further guidance on requirements and expectations of the LNO.

Refer to Section 9000 Personnel and Services Directory for a list of federal, state and local trustees, agency representatives and environmental, economic and political stakeholders.

2420 Investigators

The responsibilities of the Investigation Staff include (it should be noted that the majority of the investigation responsibilities fall under the Operations Section):

- Coordinate concurrent investigations and conduct cooperative investigations where appropriate.
- Manage the availability of evidence that may be required by separate or divergent investigation.
- Inform the Unified Command of the status of investigations.
- Implement and manage the Investigation Staff needed to proactively accomplish investigation tasking.

While many, if not all, spills and releases are marine casualties over which the Coast Guard has jurisdiction under Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations part 4, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) often investigates accidents resulting in large oil or hazardous substance discharges. Accordingly, relationships between investigators will be governed by the Memorandum of Understanding between the Coast Guard and the NTSB, as well as side-bar agreements on investigation between state and local investigators. The FOSC will normally group the investigation as a separate entity from the response through the LNO. The LNO will normally appoint an assistant solely to handle the investigators during a large response or complex investigation; this assistant should immediately contact the Coast Guard Headquarters Office of Investigation and Analysis in Washington, DC through the Coast Guard chain of command to discuss the details of the investigation/response relationship in the particular case at hand.

2430 Trustee Funding – NRDA

Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) is the process of identifying and quantifying the resource impacts and evaluating the value of impacted resources for the purpose of restoration. Successful pursuit of NRDA actions, either by the trustees alone or in cooperation with the RP(s), is a complex process comprising numerous tasks involving the interaction of scientists, economists, lawyers, and administrators. The DOI and NOAA Rules reduce some of the complexity by establishing an assessment process and providing a mechanism for determining the merits of going forth with the assessment and claim. The process provides a record of the trustees' decisions. NRDA is always separate from the response to the incident.

The RP should be the primary funding source for the NRDA. The trustees will need early access to representatives of the RP to determine the availability of funding, personnel, and equipment for damage assessment activities. The Lead Administrative Trustee (LAT) will first notify the appropriate USCG representative and request that a meeting be arranged between the Natural Resource Trustees and the RP's representative.

Should the USCG fail to arrange a meeting in a timely fashion, the Natural Resource Trustees will establish contact directly with the RP's representative. When the RP is unknown, contacting the RP is not feasible, or the RP is unwilling or unable to provide funds, the LAT may request funding from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund.

The National Pollution Fund Center's (NPFC) Natural Resource Damage (NRD) Claims Division adjudicates claims for natural resource damages arising out of oil spills (or the substantial threat of a spill) to the navigable waters of the United States. Those damages may include:

- The costs to restore, rehabilitate, replace or acquire the equivalent of the injured resource.
- Any interim lost use or diminution in value of the injured resource pending restoration.
- The reasonable cost of assessing those damages.

Natural Resource Trustees designated by the President, State or Territorial Governor or Tribal governing authority may submit NRD claims to the NPFC. A responsible party may assert a claim against the Fund for removal costs and damages, which may include payments to a United States trustee, A State trustee, an Indian tribe trustee, or a foreign trustee for natural resource damages, if the responsible party demonstrates an entitlement to a defense to liability under Section 2703 or entitlement to a limitation of liability under Section 2704.

Federal Lead Administrative Trustees (FLATs) may also access the OSLTF to initiate pre-assessment activities in accordance with an Interagency Agreement (IAG) between the FLAT and the NPFC. Additional guidance and forms trustees can use to document costs can be found at NRD Claims & Initiate Requests Quarterly Progress & Cost Documentation Reporting Forms.

For initiate pre-assessment requests, during or after business hours, please contact the NPFC directly.

2430.1 Lead Administrative Trustee

The exchange of information between and coordination of natural resource damage assessment and response activities can be beneficial by preventing natural resource injury or losses, avoiding duplication of data-gathering, and allowing for efficient use of available personnel and equipment. Therefore, the lead Federal Natural Resource Trustee will notify the US Coast Guard of the LAT as soon as possible after an oil spill. As required by Executive Order (E.O.) 12777, the Federal Natural Resource Trustee must select a LAT. Depending on the resources at risk and other relative factors, it might be appropriate for the LAT to be a non-federal agency. In such cases, the Federal Natural Resource Trustees would still select a Federal LAT for the purpose of coordination with the representatives of the OSLTF to initiate the damage assessment.

The non-federal LAT will coordinate all other damage assessment activities. The LAT typically works under either the Planning Section or Liaison Officer and is often titled the NRDA Representative.

Most NRDA activities occur outside the UC. The appropriate place within ICS for emergency response information exchange and coordination to occur depends on the nature of the response and the trustees involved.

- The Planning Section is responsible for collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the incident, including information about natural resources. This is often a logical place for the liaison between trustee NRDA work and the incident response. The trustee liaison is provided by the LAT or other personnel designated to serve this function. The person within the Planning Section responsible for working with the LAT may be the SSC or other personnel designated to serve this function. It is extremely important for the person within the Planning Section working with the LAT to communicate the NRDA operations to the UC and response operations to the LAT.
- The Command Staff may be the most appropriate place for the LAT liaison for incidents with significant natural resource injury concerns or where trustee concerns are not adequately addressed through the Planning Section.

The NRDA Representative is responsible for coordinating NRDA needs and activities of the trustees that make up the NRDA Teams with the ICS spill response operations. This includes close coordination with the Planning Section for obtaining timely information on the spill and injuries to natural resources. The NRDA Representative will coordinate with the SSC, the RP(s), and Legal specialists for possible coordination of NRDA or injury determination activities.

Specific responsibilities of the NRDA Representative include:

- Attend appropriate planning meetings to facilitate communication between NRDA Team and ICS elements;
- Identify site access, transportation support, logistics requirements and staffing needs to the proper ICS elements;
- Interact with ICS elements to collect information essential to NRDA;
- Coordinate sampling requirements with Sampling Specialists and the Situation Unit;
- Coordinate with the LNO and the SSC to identify other organizations available to support NRDA activities;
- Ensure that NRDA activities do not interfere or conflict with response objectives.

2500 Intelligence

2500.1 Intelligence Officer

The role of the Intelligence function in an Incident Command System organization provides the UC with a conduit to intelligence information that can have a direct impact on the safety of response personnel and influence the disposition of maritime security assets.

The Intelligence Group is responsible for three major functions: (1) information intake and assessment; (2) operations security, operational security, and information security; and (3) information/intelligence management.

Agencies that may support the Intelligence Officer include:

- USCG Field Intelligence Support Team (FIST)
- FBI Field Intelligence Group (FIG)
- State / Local Police Intelligence
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Intel Analysts)
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP Analysts)
- Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF)

The IMH (Chapter 9) offers further guidance on requirements and expectations of the Intelligence Officer.

2600 Reserved

2700 Reserved

2800 Reserved

2900 Reserved for Area/District