

Aleutians Seafood Processor Oil Spill Protection
Meeting Summary
March 19, 2008

Attendees:

Reid Brewer, UA	Becki Kubena, Icicle Seafoods
John Brown, ADEC	JR Pearson, City of Unalaska
LT Benjamin Duarte, USCG MSD	Leslie Pearson, ADEC
Bryan Finley, Icicle Seafoods	Greg Peters, Alyeska Seafoods
Gary Folley, ADEC	Tim Robertson, Nuka Research
Eric Graham, UniSea Inc.	Becky Sheffield, ADEC
Pete Henderickson, UNFA	Margaret Williams, WWF

Leslie Pearson opened the meeting with an explanation of the purpose of the meeting and introductions. The purpose of the meeting is to convene seafood processors, regulatory agencies and local government to address the issue of oil spills in the vicinity of processor facilities, including spill risks, response options, the format of a document/plan, and the responsibilities of each party in the event of an oil spill.

Tim Robertson gave a short presentation on the nature of site-specific response plans developed for sensitive areas. This is the first such planning process in Alaska intended to protect seafood processing facilities from an oil spill source outside the facility. He also noted the [Spill Tactics for Alaska Responders \(STAR\) Manual](#) and [Commercial Fisheries Water Quality Sampling Methods and Procedures Manual](#) available on the [ADEC/SPAR/IPP website](#).

The group discussed the most likely sources of a water-borne spill that might affect the Aleutian seafood processing facilities in Unalaska. These include:

- Diesel or hydraulic oil from a nearby fishing vessel or tug,
- Diesel from one of the bulk fuel facilities or fuel barge, and
- IFO or Bunker C from a nearby tramper or container ship.

Other sources, such as a large spill from a ship outside of Unalaska Bay, are also possible, as the Selendang Ayu event in 2004 demonstrated.

There was a discussion of the seawater intakes and uses in the seafood processing facilities. The seawater intakes are located 20 to 60 feet below the surface near the facility docks. All intakes are located off the bottom, and thus draw from mid-water. Seawater is used for many purposes in each plant, mostly for non-contact with seafood purposes. Icicle, Alyeska, and Westward seafood plants might be able to switch to freshwater if oil spill contamination threatened, depending on the availability of freshwater from the City. The City produces up to 9 million gallons per day for all its customers. Domestic water for City residents is the highest priority. Freshwater is most limited in late winter and late summer. The Unisea facility would not be able to run without seawater.

The fate of spilled oil was also discussed. It was noted that almost all oil is less dense than seawater and thus floats. Lighter oils, like diesel, evaporate rapidly and never sink below the wave-influenced waters near the surface. Heavier oils, like IFO and Bunker C, are more persistent and as they weather and come into contact with solids suspended in the water column, they become less buoyant. In some rare instances these oils may become neutrally buoyant or slightly heavier than seawater. In this case, the seawater intakes might be threatened. There is still a need to protect the facilities from surface spills to prevent contamination of fishing vessels, fishing gear, and waterfront facilities.

All facilities do have the ability to monitor their seawater systems for the presence of hydrocarbons through batch samples. The test only takes a couple of minutes to run, but there is no continuous monitoring on the seawater intakes at this time.

Everyone agreed that the best way to protect the seafood processing facilities would be to contain the oil spill as close to the source as possible, which requires a rapid response. The second line of defense would be to contain the oil on the water before it impacts facilities. The third line of defense would be to protect the facilities by exclusion, deflection, or diversion booming. LT Duarte noted that barges are now required to pre-boom during fuel transfer operations and conduct operations in daylight hours, thus providing for an initial measure of protection.

While the bulk fuel facility operators are trained in spill response and have some response equipment, their spill response organization (Alaska Chadux) is located in Anchorage. Alaska Chadux is also the registered response contractor for most non-tank vessels calling in Unalaska. Most fishing vessels and vessels in insistent passage are not required to have a response contractor. Mobilizing Alaska Chadux to Unalaska requires at least six hours under the best circumstances and could take days, depending on weather. The US Coast Guard has a spill response contract with Magone Marine, but their resources are limited. It was noted that each facility has a number of HAZWOPER-trained personnel and there are other trained members in the community.

The group discussed forming a community-based response organization for rapid response to a spill. This would require maintaining a group of trained responders that would be on-call for immediate response. Several considerations were noted:

- Responders must be current in HAZWOPER training and be proficient in using available response equipment,
- Responders have to operate under some umbrella organization that has the proper insurance, and
- Either the responsible party, the US Coast Guard, or ADEC must direct the response.

It was suggested that the City of Unalaska might be the sponsoring organization for a local community response team. It was noted that the City has a Local Response Agreement with ADEC, which can be used to reimburse the City for readiness and response costs.

If a team was formed, it should be guided by a written response plan. The plan should include several spill scenarios and a response strategy for each. The plan would identify

available spill responders and equipment, call-out and mobilization procedures, and response coordination procedures. It was suggested that the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) be consulted to see they would be interested in facilitating such a response plan.

The group decided that it would be valuable to develop site-specific strategies to protect the seafood processing facilities in Unalaska. One objective of the strategies should be to minimize the impact to the operation of the facilities, including hindrance of vessel traffic. It was noted that both booming immediately outside the docks would hinder vessels traffic and thus plant operations. Alyeska seafood is immediately adjacent to the channel into Iliuliuk Bay, which cannot be blocked. It was decided to draft the following strategies:

- Exclusion of the Icicle Seafoods facility at the head of Dutch Harbor with a gate for vessel access,
- Deflection and diversion at the north end of the channel into Iliuliuk Bay allowing for vessel traffic entry,
- Containment of the small boat harbor to trap oil spill from vessels in this basin,
- Exclusion and diversion of the channel south of the Unalaska bridge,
- Exclusion of the Westward Seafood facility with one or more gates for vessel traffic, and
- Exclusion of the Akutan Trident Seafood facility with one or more gates for vessel traffic.

Generalized tactics will also be developed for sub-surface protection of seawater intakes, but not specifically applied to each facility.

Other topics discussed included:

- A need for procedures to deal with contaminated seafood products aboard fishing vessels,
- A need for sewage pump-out facility in Dutch Harbor and at the small boat harbor,
- A need for a Clean Harbors plan for Unalaska, and
- LT Duarte offered to allow interested citizens to attend the annual USCG HAZWOPER training in August.

Action Items:

- Draft meeting summary and circulate for review – Nuka Research,
- Develop strategies for seafood facility protection and post on website for review by group– Nuka Research
- Develop generalized tactics for subsurface seawater intakes – Nuka Research,
- Notify LEPC of this project and provide them with a meeting summary – Nuka Research
- Consider forming a local response group and plan– local participants and City Government
- Contact Westward Seafoods and Trident Seafoods (Akutan) and provide them with a summary of this meeting – Nuka Research.