



ALASKA UNIFIED PLAN UPDATE MARCH 2016

FACT SHEET

The current proposal to adjust portions of the *Unified Plan: Alaska Federal and State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharges and Releases* (Alaska Unified Plan) relating to the Regional Stakeholders Committee (RSC) has been developed over several years, by a workgroup consisting of all state and federal On Scene Coordinators who conduct spill and hazardous material response in the state. The process to update this section is described in Annex D of the Unified Plan. We are currently at the public comment step. The changes to the plan were proposed to enhance engagement with communities and tribes during oil spill responses

Why is the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) updating the Regional Stakeholders Committee (RSC) sections of the Unified Plan?

During recent oil spill response incidents the State and Federal, On Scene Coordinators (OSC's) found the existing RSC section wasn't clear about stakeholder participation. In particular, OSC's need to work directly with representatives from tribes and local governments since they often have response assets that can be utilized for an event and have an obligation to protect the residents in their communities. Additionally, The State of Alaska, US Environmental Protection Agency, and US Coast Guard have a responsibility to consult directly with them. The conversation with other stakeholders, who have different needs and obligations, warrants a separate audience which is why the proposed change creates two separate groups. If a new functional process is not developed, it is unlikely a Unified Command would utilize the existing RSC since the establishment of the committee is voluntary.

Under the proposed change, how will my local government or tribe be engaged during a response?

Local government officials and tribal representatives will be part of the Tribal and Local Governments (TLG) group which will meet with the Unified Command frequently or as issues arise. The TLG members will have an obligation to keep their residents and stakeholders informed and be aware of issues and concerns their community's may have on environmental, social, cultural, and economic issues. They must relay these back to the Unified Command so they can be addressed.

I am a part of a group that is very interested in the response, has expertise to offer and/or am personally impacted by the incident. How will I get information and provide input to the response?

If you are a member of a tribe or local government employee, you will be in the TLG. If you are an impacted stakeholder (fisherman, recreational user, non-governmental organization etc.) you will be part of the Affected Stakeholders Group (ASG). The ASG members will have an obligation to keep members of their respective organizations informed and be aware of issues and concerns their members may have. They must relay these back to the Unified Command so they can be addressed.

The TLG and ASG are both established so that they can participate in the response and provide expertise. A liaison will be assigned to each group to facilitate communication with the Unified Command and ensure there is a free flow of information both directions.

The best way to be involved is proactively, before an incident occurs. Information from communities throughout the state is gathered and regularly updated in the ten Subarea Contingency Plans. That will be

the first place the liaison will look to know what groups to reach out to.

How will the two groups (the TLG and ASG) get information about the response?

Both groups will receive regular incident briefings and all information provided by the Joint Information Center. While the Unified Plan had previously stated the Incident Action Plan (IAP) would be provided to stakeholders, it is impractical to do so because the distribution of these large documents is procedurally unachievable. More importantly, a lot of information in the IAP is confidential which means it cannot legally be shared. Depending on the specific incident and impacted stakeholders, the Unified Command will share portions of the Incident Action Plan with the TLG and ASG as they become available for release. The State of Alaska typically maintains a website with IAP information that has been cleared for distribution as well.

What types of concerns or information would the TLG be able to provide to the incident management team?

The TLG may provide health and safety issues, community infrastructure impacts from increased population, economic impacts, transportation information and issues, harbor facilities, subsistence concerns, and cultural concerns are just a few of the examples of information that can be valuable to the incident management team.

What types of concerns or information would the ASG be able to provide to the incident management team?

The ASG may provide information on cultural concerns, sensitive areas that may be additional protection, available resources such as equipment or personnel and economic impacts.

What other options are there for me to receive information about the incident?

Information is disseminated using many different formats including ADEC's website, Facebook, Twitter, incident response specific websites and public meetings to name a few.

What role does a Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCACs) play during an incident?

The normal contribution of the RCAC is to provide local knowledge and technical expertise within the Incident Command Structure. They often have staff imbedded in the Operations and Planning Sections as well as the Joint Information Center. RCACs inform local community members and other concerned groups about response activities and provide information on local concerns and priorities to the Unified Command in order to facilitate operational decisions. This proposal does not change the role of RCACs as currently specified in the Alaska Unified Plan. The Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet and Kodiak Subarea Contingency Plans state RCACs monitor on-water activities and observe and verify spill response and cleanup efforts.

What is the responsibilities of the Liaisons?

The responsibly party is legally required to investigate, contain and cleanup a hazardous substance spill. The Unified Command is responsible for providing a liaison to conduct the community outreach aspect of a response under the oversight of State and Federal representatives. The Liaison is responsible for facilitating meetings between the TLG and ASG and Unified Command, facilitate the flow of information between the UC and the TLG and ASG, assist the TLG and ASG with their duties, and ensure the UC hears the concerns of the TLG and ASG.

Who can access the Command Center?

In order to provide a safe and focused environment for the Unified Command to work in, typically the command center is in a secure facility and unrestricted access to the command center is not allowed for those not part of the Unified Command's Incident Management Team. Because the TLG and ASG will be actively involved with the Unified Command, information will be flowing between the groups. But a liaison will be the primary method of communication to expedite information sharing.

What other changes are being proposed?

In addition to creating two stakeholder groups and correcting what information can legally be shared, changes to language about frequency of meetings with TLG and ASG representatives and when the meetings must occur is being changed to allow for more flexibility. All responses are different. Depending on the incident, the Unified Command may prefer to interact with stakeholders more frequently or at different times. The proposed changes allows for more flexibility for those interactions.

What is the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT)?

The ARRT is a joint planning body consisting of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, The United States Coast Guard and The United States Environmental Protection Agency. This team is responsible, under the authority of the National Contingency Plan, together with resource trustees from many state and federal agencies, to develop and maintain the Alaska Unified Plan.

What is the Unified Command?

The Unified Command (UC) is a representative of the three signatories' of the Unified Plan, ADEC, EPA, USCG and the responsible party who spilled/release the product. In some cases a Local On-Scene Coordinator (LOSC) from the local community is also included in the UC. These individuals are the lead state/federal/RP and local representatives during a response.

What is an On Scene Coordinator?

An On Scene Coordinator (OSC) is the lead representative from the state of Alaska, the federal government, and local government or community, who manages all governmental resources used or available during a response, these individuals make up the Unified Command.