



DEC Fact Sheet

Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Process

The following information was taken in part from the NOAA Shoreline Assessment Manual. To access the entire document, see below for the web link.

When spilled oil contaminates Alaska shoreline habitats, responders must survey the affected areas to determine the appropriate response. Although general approvals or decision tools for using shoreline cleanup methods can be developed during planning stages, specific cleanup recommendations must integrate field data on shoreline habitats, type and degree of shoreline contamination, and spill-specific physical processes. Cleanup endpoints must be established early so that appropriate cleanup methods can be selected to meet the cleanup objectives.

Shoreline surveys must be conducted systematically because they are crucial components of effective decisions. Also, repeated surveys are needed to monitor the effectiveness and effects of ongoing treatment methods (changes in shoreline oiling conditions, as well as natural recovery), so that the need for changes in methodology, additional treatment, or constraints can be evaluated.

During a spill response, the shoreline assessment function is commonly conducted under the Environmental Unit within the Planning Section of the Incident Command System (ICS). Further information regarding ICS and response structures and roles can be found in the Alaska Incident Management System (AIMS) Guide for Oil and Hazardous Substance Response and the US Coast Guard's Incident Management Handbook.

The teams are often made up of representatives from state and federal resource agencies and the responsible party. Members of the team can include 1) Shoreline Assessment Coordinator and 2) Shoreline Assessment Team Leader or 3) Team member. Shoreline Assessment Teams collect the data needed to develop a shoreline cleanup plan that maximizes the recovery of oiled habitats and resources, while minimizing the risk of injury from cleanup efforts. Consideration should always be given to:

- Potential for human exposure, by direct contact or by eating contaminated seafood;
- Extent and duration of environmental impacts if the oil is not removed;
- Natural removal rates;
- Potential for remobilized oil to affect other sensitive resources; and
- Likelihood that cleanup may cause greater harm than the oil alone.

Information from these assessments must be timely and of uniform quality and content to meet the requirements of the cleanup operation. The teams must also coordinate their field activities with the spill responders working in the areas being assessed. This ensures that all operations are conducted safely and that important information is exchanged.

A commonly used term for all these activities is SCAT. This stands for *Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Team*.

More information is available at the following websites:

NOAA Shoreline Assessment Manual: <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/oilaid/pdf/SAM.pdf>

NOAA Shoreline Countermeasures Manual: <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/counter/oilcounter.html>