

JOB AID: VOLUNTEERS

A JOB AID FOR OIL DISCHARGE AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RELEASE RESPONSES IN ALASKA

August 2019

Please note that this is a draft document. Additional formatting and content review and revision is planned, but not yet scheduled.

Content within this Job Aid captures information from Annex V of the superseded Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil & Hazardous Substance Discharges/Releases (Unified Plan); Change 3 January 2010/ Administrative Update March 2018 and from the superseded Kodiak, Subarea Contingency Plans, Part B “Resources” Section 5 “Volunteers.”

ANNEX V: VOLUNTEERS

The use of volunteers has been an item of increasing interest following several incidents of note in the United States.

The possible use of volunteers is recognized in 40 CFR 300 (the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan [NCP]), part 185 (c) as follows: Area Contingency Plans (ACPs) shall establish procedures to allow for well-organized, worthwhile, and safe use of volunteers, including compliance with 300.150 regarding worker health and safety. ACPs should provide for the direction of volunteers by the on-scene coordinator, remedial project manager, or by other federal, state, or local officials knowledgeable in contingency operations and capable of providing leadership. ACPs also should identify specific areas in which volunteers can be used, such as beach surveillance, logistical support, or bird and wildlife treatment. The definitions section of the NCP includes “volunteer” as follows: **Volunteer** means any individual accepted to perform services by the lead agency that has authority to accept volunteer services (examples: See 16 U.S.C. 742f(c)). A volunteer is subject to the provisions of the authorizing statute and the NCP.

Within the State of Alaska, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) does not embrace the concept of the use of volunteers for oil and hazardous substance response for a number of reasons, including insurance and liability issues and general accountability (the need for a dedicated work force to meet specified performance standards, availability to work as scheduled, and not as time permits, etc.).

In the case of a major spill event, the ADEC will direct the responsible party (RP) to train and hire an additional work force (volunteers may be considered, but will be hired only as paid employees) as necessary. If no RP exists (or the RP refuses to hire needed additional workers), then the ADEC will use its term contractors and proceed with emergency hiring of additional workers, as necessary. The agency will bill the RP and cost recover for any and all costs involved in the response, including the agency’s costs to bring on additional workers (e.g., paid employees, not volunteers).

General Guidelines on the Use of Volunteers:

The National Response Team is developing guidelines for the use of volunteers in support on an oil or hazardous substance response.

The Pacific States/British Columbia Task Force for Oil Spills has developed a document entitled ***Planning Guidelines for Convergent Volunteer Management***, which may be viewed at the following website:

http://www.oilspilltaskforce.org/docs/planning_for_volunteer_management.pdf

CONTENT FROM THE KODIAK SUBAREA CONTINGENCY PLAN WORK GROUP:

Local volunteers can play an important role in oil spill response, and this is especially true in the Arctic and Western Alaska Area, where there is a wealth of local knowledge pertaining to wildlife populations, currents, tides and other environmental phenomena. During a spill emergency, it is likely that large numbers of local community members will arrive on scene, eager to participate in response activities.

A volunteer coordination plan is necessary to effectively manage and direct volunteer activities such as recruitment, training, communications and referral. This plan addresses such issues for all “unaffiliated” volunteers, or volunteers who are not already affiliated with a response organization. Affiliated volunteers should work through their respective agencies.

This plan has been modeled after the Volunteer Action Plan developed for Kenai Peninsula Borough with funding from Arco Marine, Inc. This plan is designed to deal only with volunteer coordination activities during an actual spill response.

Organization and Activation: A Volunteer Coordinator may be appointed by the Incident Commander to manage all aspects of the volunteer program, including communications, recruitment, training and referral. The Volunteer Coordinator will report directly to the Logistics Section Chief.

The Volunteer Coordinator will operate a Volunteer Referral Center (VRC), which will refer volunteers to appropriate ICS units or activities where they can apply their skills and interests. The VRC will provide initial screening, skill and training identification, and orientation. Additional screening, training and supervision will be provided by the ICS unit to which the volunteer is referred.

The facility selected to serve as the VRC may be co-located with the Command Center, or may be located nearby in a school, church, recreation center, community building, or other such facility. The facility should provide easy public access, enough room for reception and training areas, and some communication capabilities. The VRC should have basic office equipment, such as computers, telephones, fax machines, copiers, and office supplies.

Insurance and Liability: There are currently no state or borough provision for insurance/liability/worker’s compensation coverage for volunteers in an emergency response. In most cases, volunteers will be working for the Responsible Party (RP) or lead agency in charge of spill response. The VRC will act only as a referral agency and will not directly supervise the volunteers, with the exception of those volunteers working in the VRC. Effective screening, training, and supervision will help to limit liability when assigning volunteers.

Training, Screening and Skill Identification: As potential volunteers contact the referral center, they will be screened and referred to ICS units based on their skills, training and certification, and availability. During response and recovery activities, response agencies or the RP may contact the Volunteer Referral Center and submit requests for volunteers.

Training, screening and skill identification will be accomplished by using the following:

- A training module that covers basic orientation to the AWA Contingency Plan, ICS organizations and functions (both general section divisions and specific unit tasks), and basic safety and communications procedures.
- A database that identifies volunteers’ completed training, additional skills and certifications (HAZWOPER, wildlife hazing, etc.), and individual preferences and availability.

General Guidelines on the Use of Volunteers: The National Response Team developed guidelines for the use of volunteers in support on an oil or hazardous substance response:

- [Use of Volunteers Guidelines For Oil Spills \(2012\)](#)
- [Use of Volunteers for Oil Spills Memorandum of Understanding](#)

The Pacific States/British Columbia Task Force for Oil Spills has developed a document entitled **Planning Guidelines for Convergent Volunteer Management**, which may be viewed at the following website: http://www.oilspilltaskforce.org/docs/planning_for_volunteer_management.pdf

Assistance Options

During response and recovery operations, the following process will be used to identify needs, recruit, and place volunteers:

- Designate Volunteer Coordinator and establish VRC as soon as Incident Command is mounted.
- Establish and publicize toll-free phone number.
- Distribute volunteer request forms to ICS Section Chiefs (through Command Center).
- In cooperation with Public Information Officer, distribute volunteer information to local newspaper and radio.
- As volunteers contact the VRC, screen and refer them to agencies/organizations/ICS units based upon their skills, training and availability.

The Volunteer Request Form (below) should be copied and distributed to responders via the Command Center as early as possible. Responding agencies, contractors, organizations, or ICS unit leaders will use these forms to identify volunteer needs.

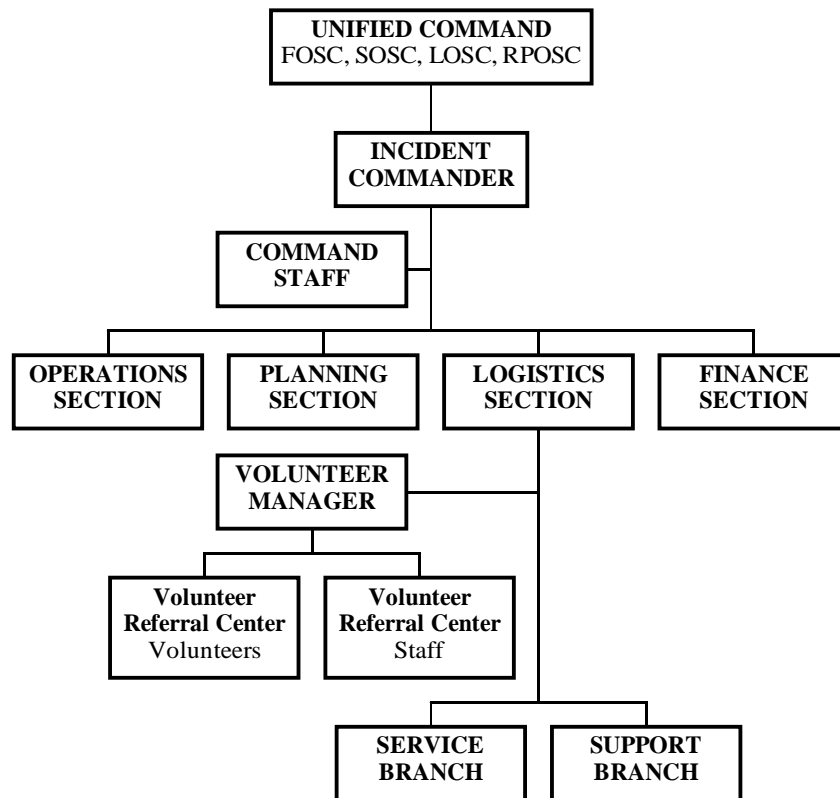
Convergent volunteers (volunteers arriving at the VRC or on-scene) will be directed to the VRC and asked to fill out a Volunteer Registration Form (below).

Coordination

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the implementation and management of the Volunteer Coordination Plan. It is the Volunteer Coordinator's responsibility to recognize and anticipate the potential role of volunteers in a spill response, to coordinate needs and available resources, and to manage the VRC in recruitment, identification, training, and placement of volunteers during a response.

All volunteer referral center staff and volunteers will report to the Volunteer Coordinator, who reports to the Logistics Section Chief (Reference diagram below).

Figure 4-27: Volunteers and the Incident Command System



The Volunteer Coordinator's duties may include the following:

- Serve as a liaison with the IC and Unified Command via the Logistics Section Chief to coordinate volunteer needs.
- Serve as the principal contact for all volunteers and all units/agencies needing volunteers.
- Establish and manage the VRC to include registration, orientation, placement, recruitment, training, and referrals.
- Establish a communication system, including a toll-free phone number, fax lines and fax machines, phones, and a link to the Command Center.
- Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (or Joint Information Center) to provide notification to the media regarding types of volunteer jobs available and procedures for volunteering.
- Provide safety training as necessary for all volunteers to ensure they are properly trained and equipped and in compliance with federal, state and local safety regulations.
- Coordinate with response agencies and the Responsible Party to provide additional volunteers as needed and to coordinate referrals.
- Maintain record keeping of volunteers, training and certification, hours worked, and their assigned activities.
- Provide volunteer recognition.

Volunteer Referral Center

1. Facility: the VRC should provide:

- Easy public access
- Room for training and orientation
- Basic communications capabilities and office equipment:
 - Telephones
 - 2-3 phone lines, one of which is toll free incoming only
 - Fax machine and 2 dedicated fax lines (ingoing & outgoing)
 - Communication link to Command Center
 - Access to news & information releases to media and local government in order to advertise volunteer needs and toll free number
 - Computers and printers
 - Copier
 - Maps, flip charts, bulletin boards, pens, tape, markers
 - Paper, pens, pencils, stapler and other general office supplies

2. Establishment

In setting up the VRC, the Volunteer Coordinator should consider the following:

- Arrange space to allow for foot traffic and to maximize wall space.
- Face tables and chairs so that information can be viewed easily.
- Allow enough space, pens, clipboards, etc. so that volunteers can fill out registration materials.
- Clearly identify the reception desk/area.
- Provide seating.
- Post signs directing potential volunteers to the building/room.
- In the event of a large spill response where sufficient staffing is available at the VRC and volunteer needs are extensive, set up stations for each major class of work, such as:
 - Administrative
 - Communications
 - Shoreline Operations
 - On-Water Operations
 - Wildlife Recovery/Rehabilitation
 - Repair/Construction
 - Logistical Support
- Assign early volunteers to staff the Referral Center and to be couriers to bring information about volunteer needs from the Command Center to the VRC.
- Set aside time and space for training and orientation.
- Set up an information bulletin board. This area may serve as an informal information and referral area.

Early volunteers should be used to supplement staffing of the VRC. Staffing needs at the VRC will include:

- Receptionist: answers questions, phones, gives out forms & directions
- Data Entry Clerk: enter personnel information into database
- File Clerk: files, copies, sends & receives faxes
- Intake and Referral Personnel: conducts initial screening, matches volunteers with needs
- Communications: compiles updates of volunteer needs, maintains bulletin board
- Training: coordinates/conducts general training & orientation for all volunteers
- Facility Support: maintains equipment, cleanliness, order
- Transportation: assist with transportation as needed
- Courier: serves as go-between for VRC and command center

It is essential that all volunteers are routed through the VRC. Volunteers arriving on-scene who have not first checked in at the VRC must be referred to the VRC for assignment.

It is important to track volunteers, recognize, and reward their efforts. The following are suggestions for volunteer identification, record keeping and recognition:

- Develop and maintain a database of current interested volunteers and skills using appropriate computer software.
- Develop and distribute an after-action newsletter or report to all volunteers who participated in a spill response.
- Issue identification badges to all volunteers as they are assigned to specific jobs.
- Ensure that all volunteers register at the VRC before placement in a job. Encourage unit leaders or agency personnel to document volunteer hours worked.

If a Responsible Party directs the spill response, volunteer coordination may proceed according to the RP's approved contingency plan. This plan has been designed to facilitate volunteer coordination and promote positive community involvement during all phases of a spill response. If vessel or facility operators in the area have not developed individual volunteer management plans, they are encouraged to incorporate this plan by reference into their state-approved C-plans.

Training

Training will be provided to all volunteers assigned to jobs during a response. If, in the future, a pre-emergency volunteer coordination program is implemented in the AWA Area, volunteers may receive ongoing training and be added to a permanent volunteer roster. This process would facilitate initial activation of trained volunteers.

Training sessions for volunteers should include:

- Basic orientation to this Arctic and Western Alaska Area Plan and the Regional Contingency Plan
- ICS structure, organization, and general and specific job requirements
- Site-specific hazards
- Environmental and cultural concerns related to the response
- Safety and security procedures
- Proper attire and safety equipment
- Safety training (Reference below)
- Liability

- Limitations on non-professionals

Training may also be provided for bird and wildlife rescue and treatment, shoreline cleanup, food distribution, check-in procedures and other response activities.

The initial volunteer training (conducted at the VRC) may be supplemented by additional position-specific training provided once the volunteer is assigned to a job.

Safety training for volunteers should address the following policies and procedures:

- Worker's compensation
- Drug and alcohol policies
- Firearms
- Equipment use
- Limitations for non-professionals
- Hazwoper
- General safety procedures (buddy system, safe lifting, etc.)
- Evacuation procedures
- Potential hazards of work environment
- First Aid
- Accident Reporting Procedures

VOLUNTEER REQUEST FORM

Date/time: _____

Requesting organization/agency/unit: _____

Name of contact: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

VOLUNTEER NEEDS: Total Number of Volunteers Needed: _____

Job Title/Description: _____

Duties	Experience/Skills	Training Provided?

Equipment/Special Clothing Needs: _____

Brief Description of Training to be Provided: _____

Job Location: _____ Date/time volunteers needed: _____

Please check if available: ___ Restrooms ___ Parking

___ Safety Equipment ___ Telephone ___ Transportation to Work Site

Volunteer(s) should report to the following person for additional training/instruction:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Location: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Follow up date & time: _____ Follow up action: _____

Position(s) filled _____

Volunteer name(s): _____

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Phone (day): _____ (eve.) _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Present employer: _____ Occupation: _____

Are you currently affiliated with any response organization/volunteer group? Please name: _____

Are you certified in any of the following? Certification Type/Agency Expiration Date

Bird Rescue/Wildlife Hazing/Rehab: _____

Hazmat/Hazwoper: _____

First Aid/CPR: _____

USCG licenses: _____

Other: _____

Placement Preference: Bird or Wildlife Rescue/Rehab Shoreline/Beach Cleanup

Administrative/Clerical Basic Needs/Logistics On-Water operations

Other _____

Emergency Contact - Name: _____

Phone (day/eve): _____ Address: _____

Waiver: Signature: _____ Date: _____

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**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Training completed. \_\_\_\_\_ Date completed \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Placed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ by: \_\_\_\_\_

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