



Contingency Planning Reorganization

Decommissioning the Unified Plan and Sub-area Plans: A ‘How To’ Guide for providing Public Comments on the Regional Contingency Plan and four Area Contingency Plans

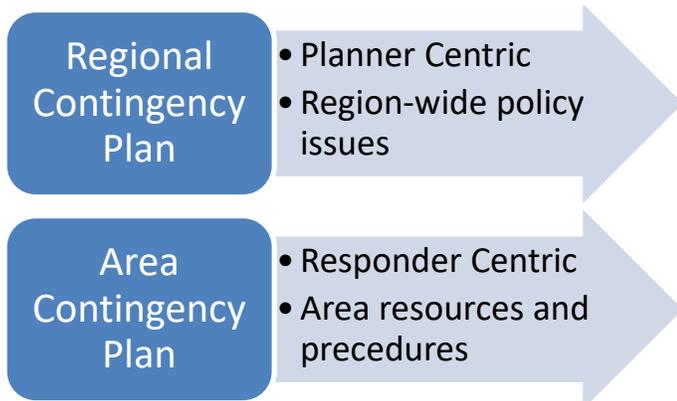
- The Alaska Regional Response Team coordinated to complete a total reorganization of contingency plans for the state of Alaska. This reorganization stemmed from an interest to bring state plans into compliance with the National Contingency Plan, and a subsequent USCG mandate to achieve contingency planning consistency on a national level.
- The Unified Plan and Sub-area Plans will be decommissioned upon approval of the new format; however, all relevant content was incorporated into the new format. Below is information on reorganization efforts and extent.
- Public comment is open and welcome. Guidelines/deadline for submitting comments are provided below.

This document is a “how to” resource for reading, comprehending and using the new Alaska contingency planning documents. Upon completion of the public comment period and signature acceptance by the respective governing authorities, the Regional Contingency Plan (RCP) and the four Area Contingency Plans (ACPs) will replace the Unified Plan and ten Sub-area Plans. Overall, it was the goal of the transitional work group to retain and transfer all relevant content from the Unified Plan/Sub-area Plans to the new format under the RCP/ACP. The Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) will govern updates to the RCP, and the Area Committees will govern future updates to the ACPs. For details on the Area Committees and Regional/Area Planning, see the previously published [FAQs](#).

Background: In the fall of 2015, the State of Alaska, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began work to evaluate the existing planning system in an effort to be better prepared in the event of an oil spill or hazardous materials release in the State.

In February 2017, the USCG Headquarters issued a memorandum directing USCG action to achieve consistency among Area Contingency Plans nation-wide in order to maintain a standard national readiness posture. Specifically, each Captain of the Port (COTP) is to manage a “stand-alone” coastal ACP unique to the single COTP zone.

State and Federal On-Scene Coordinators met in May 2017 with the chairpersons of the ARRT and the task force designated to review options for updating the Alaska Planning Framework. The task force included representation from DEC, EPA, and USCG, and later transitioned into the work group assigned to carry out this reorganization. After thorough review of the USCG memo, the On-Scene Coordinators determined that the framework visualized below is consistent with the National Contingency Plan, and agency policy requirements, provided the planning boundaries



delineate coastal and inland zones. The figure below shows this new framework as approved by the ARRT.



Product Review: On June 18, 2018, the following documents will be available for public review and comment as stipulated by State of Alaska guidelines for public comment:

- Alaska Regional Contingency Plan
- Alaska Inland Area Contingency Plan
- Southeast Alaska Area Contingency Plan
- Prince William Sound Area Contingency Plan
- Arctic and Western Alaska Area Contingency Plan

Under this new format, the RCP has taken on a unique role in comparison to its predecessor, the Alaska Unified Plan. In keeping with national precedence, the ARRT determined that the RCP would best serve to guide planning entities. Therefore, the RCP will focus on Alaska region-wide planning policy and process information. The ACPs will house responder-centric guidance and resources. This reorganization allows for streamlined area specific updates and increased ownership by the Area Committees over area-specific response details and processes.

For the purposes of this first version of the RCP and ACP documents, the ARRT Leadership instructed the work group to focus on format, choosing to limit the scope of the project to the transfer of existing information from

the Unified Plan and the Sub-area Plans into the new organizational format. Updates to content were limited to removal of outdated policy or administrative updates as determined appropriate by the work group. In forming the RCP, the work group incorporated nationwide best practices and guidance as approved by USCG, EPA, and State leadership. Inserted text from sources other than the Unified Plan and Sub-area Plans are clearly identified within the ACPs and are limited to existing policy for the USCG, EPA or State of Alaska.

Product Organization: The new plan format follows the National Incident Management System structure and aligns with national standards. This consistency increases the ease at which responders can quickly find relevant spill response information.

Within various sections of the plan, topics are organized by legacy Sub-areas. These Sub-areas have transitioned to Geographic Zones and were retained for planning purposes only. In keeping the Geographic Zone delineation, the Area Committees retain the ability to manage the wealth of knowledge across Alaska’s diverse expanse.

Furthermore, given the work group’s goal to retain all relevant information from the Unified Plan and Sub-area Plans, the Arctic & Western Alaska ACP and Inland Alaska ACP contain a section containing Geographic Zone contingency planning details (Section 9730 – Geographic Zone Contingency Plans). Area Committees may choose to dissolve or reorganize this section for future iterations of their ACP.

Differences across Area Plans: The assigned workgroup identified and documented all relevant and substantial differences across the ACPs. The work group believes that these divergences are merely a reflection of legitimate differences across Alaska’s vast landscape. As these plans mature, it is likely that more differences or area-specificity will emerge.

See supplemental document for specific formatting differences across the new planning documents.

Public Comment/Review Process: Public comment is welcome and encouraged. Please limit comments to address the scope of this project, focusing on

administrative restructuring rather than content. Content updates will be completed as needed thru the Area Committees.

The plan is available for review from June 18 to July 17, 2018 on the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's website at <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/regulation-projects/planning-structure/>

You may comment on the draft plan by submitting written comments to: Shannon Miller, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, 555 Cordova Street 2nd Floor, Anchorage, AK 99501, and by electronic mail at decsparplanning@alaska.gov. The comments must be received no later than 5 p.m. on July 17, 2018. Written comments received are public record and are subject to public inspection.

The State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you are a person with a disability who may need a special accommodation in order to participate in this public process, please contact Theresa Zimmerman at (907) 465-6171 or TDD Relay Service 1-800-770-8973/TTY or dial 711 prior to July 17, 2018 to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

After the public comment period ends, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Environmental Protection Agency will either adopt the proposed changes without further notice, or decide to take no action.